

# EDWARD WHITE

*HIS LIFE AND WORK*

FREDERICK ASH FREER









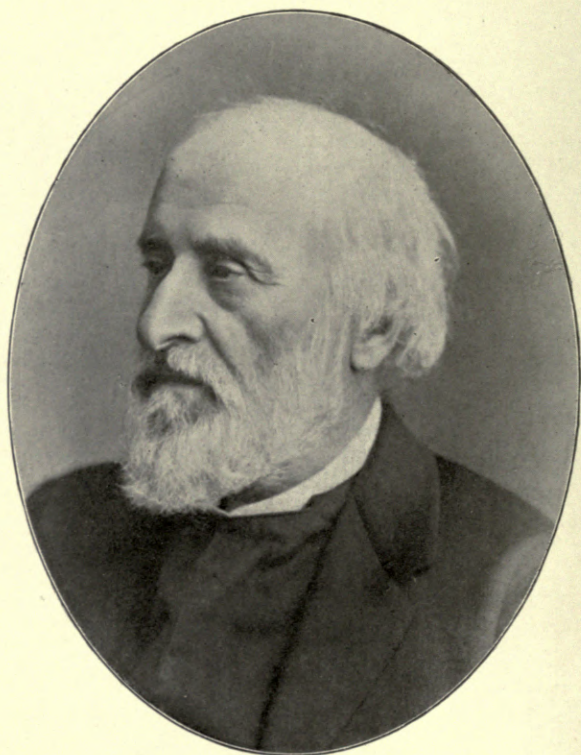
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BY  
FREDERICK ASH FREER

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## P R E F A C E

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EDWARD WHITE, the subject of this biography, was a Free-Church minister in London during a period nearly coincident with the second half of the nineteenth century. In the early part of his metropolitan career he was kept to some extent in the background, in consequence of certain unpopular theological opinions which he had made public while in a provincial pastorate; but by his powerful evangelical preaching, his sterling Christian character, and his remarkable intellectual ability, he gradually won general and hearty recognition as one of the most eminent representatives of Free-Church principles. He was also chosen to occupy the most honoured positions in the Christian community with which he was ecclesiastically associated.

Of the long and useful life of Edward White some permanent record is needed, in order that those who have not had the advantage of personal acquaintance with him may be able to gain something like an adequate idea of the man: a man whose life-work has had a marked effect upon the general mode of thinking in relation to questions of supreme importance to humanity.

Mr. White was wont to say that, after the Bible, no books are more useful than biographies of good men and women; and that the large proportion of personal history in the Bible forms an important element in the power



for good of that wonderful collection of books. And this biography has been prepared in the hope that the story of a life of such unswerving loyalty to Truth and devotion to the Gospel ministry may help to prolong the beneficent influence of that life.

The author had the privilege of years of association with Edward White in Church fellowship and Christian work, and he enjoyed Mr. White's intimate friendship until his life's close. He has endeavoured to make the book as much as possible a self-revelation by the subject of it. He offers his sincere thanks to all those friends who have favoured him in any way with their co-operation.

F. A. F.

*September 1902.*

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This second edition is a reprint of the first, with a few emendations and additions.

F. A. F.

*February 1903.*



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## CHAPTER I

### EARLY YEARS

1819-1835

**I**N the case of every man who has made his mark in the world it is both interesting and instructive to review the circumstances and relationships of his early life, and the various influences then surrounding him, which helped to mould his character and to develop his powers. The subject of this biography has left a distinct mark in the theological world, and in this chapter will be found a description of the beginnings of a long and remarkable career.

Edward White was the seventh child of his parents, John Bazley White and Henrietta Tindal. According to his own description of them, his father "was 'an Israelite indeed' of most upright character, sunny temper, and endless industry," and his mother was "a woman of sound judgement, high principle, and indefatigable energy." These characteristics appeared also in their son. His great-grandfather, John Albra Witt, was a Hollander who immigrated to East London in the time of George II. His son, John William, without consideration for Teutonic etymology, altered his name to the English White, as being nearest in sound to the original and proper surname of Witt, which is said to have been derived from an old favourite German hero-god, the tenth from Odin.

Settling in England as a British subject, this John William White married an English wife, Mary Harwood, and their son was John Bazley White, father of the Edward whose career has now to be traced.

Of his grandmother, Mary Harwood, Edward White has recorded that he well remembered her luminous face when she was seventy years of age. He has also stated that her conversion to real religion in the later years of George Whitefield's revival brought a new tendency into a family which had been noted aforetime for a cheerful musical taste rather than for serious reflection. She thereafter brought up her son in the fear of God ; and the strength of her character has been reproduced in many of her descendants.

One among these, her grandson, Edward White, was born on the 11th of May, 1819, just a fortnight before our late revered Queen Victoria, as he was accustomed to tell his friends when speaking of his age. The place of his birth was Nine Elms Lane, a part of South London now covered by the London and South-Western Railway, his father being then a partner in the firm of Francis and White, carrying on business as makers of Portland cement in that neighbourhood. Since then the business has been removed to Swanscombe, and is now carried on under the style of J. Bazley White & Co., Limited.

Soon after this boy's birth the family removed to Norwood, where some of his earliest years were spent, and his first steps in book-learning were taken under the guidance of a Miss Aldridge. In 1826, when he was seven years old, there was another removal of the family, this time to South Lambeth, and Edward then attended a school at Stockwell.

At ten years of age he was sent to the public school at Mill Hill, in the foundation of which his father had taken a part some twenty years previously. This school was founded to provide for the education of sons of Protestant Dissenters, who were not at that time admissible into the



older public establishments. Here he continued his studies during four years, and in this period were laid the foundations of his classical learning. His testimony as to the general character of the school in those years, however, is very unfavourable. But while there he came under the instruction and influence of Thomas Priestley, who, he says, was a thorough teacher of Greek and Latin elements, and the only master, out of about twenty during his time at Mill Hill, who taught anything thoroughly. Happily, the state of things there is now very different, both as to the teaching and the *morale* of the school, which in those days left much to be desired. Yet he always retained an appreciative remembrance of the school, and often attended the meetings there on Foundation Day.

Quitting Mill Hill at the age of fourteen, he was sent for a year to a private school at Lavender Hill, Wandsworth. This necessitated a daily walk of three miles, which was doubtless more helpful than harmful to the growing lad. This school was kept by Mr. George Hughes, son of the Joseph Hughes who was one of the founders of the British and Foreign Bible Society. The love of reading, which soon afterwards became one of Edward White's leading characteristics, he attributed in some degree to the influence of this Mr. Hughes, but still more to that of his own eldest sister Ellen. That sister, after her marriage, when Mrs. Ranyard, became very widely known as the originator of the London Bible Women's Mission. Being nearly ten years his senior, she was already a woman when he left Mill Hill, and to her he was always devotedly attached. On her part there was an equally strong affection, which proved one of the most valuable formative influences upon his character. The reading circle to which she belonged, and the conversation parties which she instituted at their father's house, were also useful in stimulating his mental culture.

Being now fifteen years of age, he was taken into the

office of the cement works at Nine Elms, as a preparation for the business career which seemed naturally to open for him there. Two years were thus spent in the business, and the time was not lost, for the advantages of such business experience are many, and are often recognized in later life, even when the business itself has been abandoned. It was so in Edward White's case; for in the Christian ministry, to which he then aspired, such experience always proves valuable; it enables the minister to sympathize with business men in their difficulties, and is helpful in his practical teaching and pastoral supervision, as well as in the more material affairs of the Church over which he presides. This business period may therefore be considered as a part of the indirect preparation for his life's work.

During this period he had become a member of the Congregational Church at York Street, Walworth, of which his father was one of the leading members, and the Rev. George Clayton was the pastor. This Mr. Clayton was one of the best known and most respected Congregational ministers in London at that time. He has been described by Mr. White as a thoroughly good man, of stately appearance and speech, but an unimaginative preacher, and rigidly orthodox. In speaking of this period, and of the influence exerted by the ministry and the associations of York Street Chapel over himself and over Robert Browning, the poet—who as a lad was then a regular attendant—Mr. White has said: "If a radiance of faith and hope rests upon and hovers over the grave in Westminster Abbey where the poet lies enshrined in eternal fame, that faith and hope were nursed into stronger life under the Puritan influences to which I, and so many others, owe the final direction and consecration of our lives, influences which came from York Street Chapel."

Powerful as were these influences, however, they were not the only, and perhaps not the most powerful, forces

that were operating on the lad's character and conduct at this time. He was accustomed, as frequently as he could, on Sunday evenings to attend the ministry of the Rev. Thomas Binney, whose more original and vigorous thinking and teaching had greater attractions for the youth who was then beginning to think for himself. To Mr. Binney he was always ready to acknowledge his obligations, and with him he maintained a close friendship until Mr. Binney's death on February 24, 1874.

In a letter published in the *Christian World* in September, 1894, Mr. White thus described the effect of Mr. Binney's preaching: "When, with other very young men, I first came under his influence at the Weigh House Chapel, that man might be described as the Bible again alive in the form and speech of a nineteenth-century preacher. . . . And what was the charm which principally drew us breathless to listen to him? It was this—that whereas in so many other places of worship sacred antiquity with its records was a wearisome topic, in that meeting at the Weigh House Chapel the old world lived again from the beginning, and narratives which, when read in the dreary hum of formal church lessons for the day, passed instantly out of the memory, became in this preacher's hands a living panorama of the ancient world; so that the characters of the Old Testament's patriarchs, prophets, saints, and soldiers passed into our memories as indelible and well-nigh living and coloured transcripts of the days of old, vanquishing incredulity by the very brightness and reality of the form in which they thus obtain an earlier 'better resurrection.'"

Referring to his early experiences in connection with York Street Chapel, Mr. White, many years afterwards said that in those days "the plight of children as to their instruction in the ways of God was pitiable indeed. Practically, little was said in detail, or by way of application to individuals, of the theory then prevailing

in the ministry. But thoughtful children knew very well what doctrines underlay the surface-teaching in families, schools, and churches. It was this—that they were all born immortal beings, born with souls that must live for ever, in happiness or in torment; and born with souls so degenerate and prone to sin that there was no escape from the doom of fire in hell for ever except by regeneration, either by baptism, or, without baptism, by truth. Arminians, such as the Methodists, taught their children that *all* might escape this doom by faith and repentance. Calvinists (and the Independents and Baptists were mostly Calvinists then) taught their children that only a certain number of those born could be saved, because only a certain number were predestinated by God to be saved; all the rest born in sin, and not elected from eternity to salvation, must suffer torment in hell throughout the eternity to come. This was the creed, taught in a quiet and respectable way, under which I was myself educated among the Independents. It was not worked out in detail by the pious preacher; the younger and more thoughtful hearers were left to work it out in their own reflections.

“Mr. Robert Browning, then a boy with marvellous countenance and black and flashing eyes, listened to this doctrine in the corner of the gallery, close to the reverend preacher’s right hand, and I listened to it in the same church, on the floor. What effect it had on Mr. Robert Browning I can only guess from his poems. For myself, it nearly drove me mad with secret misery of mind, in thinking of such a God. Our young souls were enmeshed in the most perplexing tangle of contradictory ideas. We were taught that God was good and just; all the Bible and all the hymns said that, and Nature confirmed the lesson. But what could we make of this Omnipotent Being, who ‘so loved the world’ as to determine on the birth of an immense multitude of non-



elect children, who must suffer for ever, while we ourselves might be amongst the fated number? Well, it did not quite make infidels of us, for better influences were at work, but it did so very nearly. It poisoned the fountains of youthful joy, and rendered it the most dreadful task on earth to think steadily of our Creator. From fourteen years old and upwards our faith depended very much on the art of not thinking on the hateful mystery.

"Such was the youth out of which sprang my own subsequent history; and to-day I praise and extol and honour the King of Heaven, who has shaken this old and frightful system of theology almost to the ground, and is strengthening a great company to protest, year after year, against such teaching of the young.

"Throughout England, children to-day are taught the true character of God as never before. Few teachers dare to repeat to them the mediæval tales of dread under which our own earlier years were so deeply oppressed."

Notwithstanding these difficulties, Edward White looked upon the Christian ministry as the career most worthy of his adoption, and the one offering the widest scope for the exercise of the powers that he was conscious of possessing. These he determined to use in the endeavour to win sinners to the acceptance of the Gospel of the grace of God, and his aspirations towards it became ever stronger while engaged in business. Being fully conscious of the damaging effect upon his worldly prospects of such a choice, he yet decided, with his father's approval, to leave the office, and proceed with the studies which were to be a further preparation for his life-work as a Christian minister, and, as it proved, also as a theological reformer. Nor did he ever regret this decision. Only two months before his death he wrote:—

"Notwithstanding the sorrowful remembrance of many faults, the recollection of fifty years spent in the work of

trying to interest men in the Revelation of Divine Love and everlasting Life is full of gladness. I was originally destined to be partner in my father's great manufacturing business of Portland cement, where I should have acquired considerable wealth, but the review of fifty years spent in trying to proclaim eternal Life to dying men is more cheering than any retrospect of gainful trade would be."

## CHAPTER II

### PREPARATION FOR THE MINISTRY

1836-1840 ; AGE 17-21

EDWARD WHITE was not sent to a Denominational College, nor to any other theological training institution, when his destination for the ministry had been decided upon ; but he went to the minister of a Congregational Church at Norwood, the Rev. Charles Nice Davies, of whom ever afterwards Mr. White spoke in terms of warm gratitude ; more especially for having taught him the importance of a connected study of the books of Scripture. He has often declared that his own theological training consisted in consecutive, patient, and persistent study of the sacred books in the original languages. This kind of training had its disadvantages, but it made him a most effective expositor of Holy Scripture throughout his long ministry. In a letter written in his old age, and published after his death in the *Christian* of August 11, 1898, he said :—

“ Nothing is more needed than a revolution in the teaching of theological colleges, so that the students may be founded not on the word of men, but of God, by direct and connected study, close and continuous exposition, based on all existing aids in hermeneutics, so that the men may early and clearly know that God has revealed Himself

to man, and requires that revelation to be made known by His servants.

"As things are at present, the men go forth, not so much as 'fishers of men' as of *texts*; and thus they spend their lives in fishing for their texts, instead of in close, connected study of these wonderful writings, one half of whose meaning is '*between the verses*'—*i.e.*, in a real and logical connection of the paragraphs.

"The theory of modern preaching is to make a '*Sermo*'—a human speech—not to set forth the connected ideas of Deity, starting from that death which came by sin, and ending in the immortality which comes by the incarnate Word and the Eternal Spirit. The masses of our middle-classes who go to church are grossly ignorant of the contents of the Bible (*Biblia*—set of books), and submit to methods and rules of interpretation which they would scout if attempted to be enforced in interpreting or dealing with a classic or a newspaper.

"Here is an eruption of my little mole-hill of a volcano! But it is a just and necessary outbreak, which is (I doubt not) in direct conformity with the will of Him who is the *Amen*—'the Faithful and True Witness.' I thank God that the only theological education I ever had in early life was that received from my friend and tutor, Charles Nice Davies, an Indian officer, once Persian interpreter to his regiment, who had a bad accident to his spine, and became a minister of a Congregational church at Norwood, where I lived well-nigh a year before going to Glasgow University."

So strongly indeed did he always feel on this subject, that he afterwards made it the theme of his address from the chair of the Congregational Union, at Norwich, in 1886.

Of Mr. Davies he has said: "He was before all things a man, and a good man. He awoke my mind to full work by conversation, and taught me that only connected Scripture was Scripture." The manliness of Mr. Davies may be



illustrated by the fact that the injury to his spine was occasioned by an heroic act in stopping a pair of runaway horses in a carriage, and thus saving the lives of the lady occupants.

Edward White's next move was to Glasgow University, where, besides making progress with his studies, he formed valuable friendships. Among his friends were Dr. Wardlaw, whose church he attended, Mr. Greville Ewing, John Morell Mackenzie afterwards drowned in the *Pegasus*, Dr. J. C. Shairp, afterwards Professor of Poetry at Oxford and Principal of St. Andrew's University, John D. Morell, David Russell, Edward S. Pryce, and Professors R. Buchanan and Sir Daniel K. Sandford. Under the last named of these he studied Greek, and under Buchanan Logic; and at the end of his two years' course he obtained first honours in the Logic class and took a prize. At the meetings of the Debating Society, in the College theatre, he was a frequent speaker, and this no doubt helped him to attain that readiness of utterance for which, afterwards, he was so well known. He did not proceed to a degree, which he subsequently regretted; and he has stated that, on the whole, there was more of inspiration than of learning gained at Glasgow. So in 1838 he returned home and resumed private study at Swanscombe, where his father then resided, near to the cement works of which he was the proprietor.

It was while thus occupied in private study at home, towards the end of 1838, or early in 1839, that the event occurred which turned the current of his thoughts and of his studies in the direction which led to the production of his principal book, *Life in Christ*. At a second-hand bookstall in London he picked up a book entitled, *Eternal Punishment Proved to be not Suffering but Privation, and Immortality dependent on Spiritual Regeneration*. It was announced as being the work of "A Member of the Church of England." Although the book was thus published anonymously, there was inside this copy a manu-

script. letter, addressed to the Bishop of Llandaff, and a signature on the title-page, which together prove that the author was one James Fontaine.

This book, as Mr. White has said, coloured his whole life, for although it was neither learned nor critical, it led him to study the books of the Bible with a definite aim and purpose, to discover their real teaching on the subject of human immortality. Having carefully examined nearly all the books of Holy Scripture, making full notes in a three-volume interleaved Bible, he gained, as he has declared, "ever clearer ideas on the main questions of the Gospel revelation, by this direct and connected study of the sacred Scriptures, with resulting conviction, never afterwards lost, that immortal life is through Christ, and only in Christ for regenerate men." Since, in his early days, he had frequently suffered real torture in hearing the confident assertion of eternal suffering as the inevitable fate of all the unsaved, this conviction was an immense relief to his spirit, and it enabled him to preach the Gospel of life with all the greater freedom.

His own account of the effect upon himself of reading Mr. Fontaine's book is as follows :—

"I found myself both astonished and interested by the august idea which in simple language it unfolded ; that man, by sin, had lost immortal life ; and that the object of the stupendous procedure of the Incarnation of the God-head in the person of Christ was to restore the divine image to man, and with it an everlasting life in God. I found it impossible to shake off the impression which it made upon me, agreeing as it did so much with the surface meaning of the Bible. But the next thought was that since this doctrine had sunk out of general knowledge, as was evident by my own surprise at hearing of it, it had failed of acceptance because it was only one of many unsuccessful heresies.

"Nevertheless, I resolved to keep it in view in those

systematic studies of Holy Scripture in which I was then engaged, knowing that, although it had been generally rejected, and had sunk out of view, that was a fate which had befallen some undoubted truths in a world not much given to careful examination of evidence, and ruled in its belief by authority and by custom rather than by inquiry. Under any result, fresh examination would either confirm the idea of Mr. Fontaine's book, or would re-establish my feet upon the rock of orthodox faith. Therefore, on a night of extraordinary splendour and beauty, when the vastness of the starry heavens seemed to impart a most solemn urgency to the question of human destiny, I remember praying to the God of heaven, in a high garden on the banks of the Lower Thames, that He would lead me into the knowledge of His Truth on this matter, and strengthen me even for a life-long conflict, either to re-enforce the awful doctrine of orthodoxy on the future of humanity, or to shake its sway. I do not think any youthful spirit ever more honestly devoted itself to find out TRUTH by patient investigation, and if necessary to suffer for its diffusion, than I did on that night, when the Infinite seemed to open afresh on my view."

Meanwhile, it seemed probable, as Mr. Fontaine's view was in opposition to the general belief in the Churches, that his own conviction of its truth might shut him out from their pulpits. Accordingly he had to face this probability, and although it did not cause him to flinch from the trial, he clearly and keenly felt its seriousness. This is proved by the way in which he wrote of it to his friend Edward S. Pryce, in a letter dated Swanscombe, August 14, 1839. It is a long and remarkable letter, indicating careful study and deep thought in the writer; and if it should appear to the reader that he has employed some phrases which are too strong or too familiar, it should be remembered that the letter was written, not for publication, but for the perusal of a private friend. Yet its

introduction here seems justified, because it contains in germ the ideas subsequently developed in his later writings. The principal part of it relating to the subject of his controversy is as follows:—

“If you question a single opinion in which people are born you must endure the result of your temerity. An illustration of this sentiment is soon likely to burst upon my head, for, alas! though I hail it myself as a glorious truth, men will kill and eject me for believing it, namely, that the doctrine of sacred Scripture with regard to future punishment is that the wicked are to be destroyed. This will surprise you. All that I beg is that you will not preach the doctrine of eternal torments again until you may have reconsidered these following notes:—

“1. The common doctrine rests on a figurative interpretation of life and death—ὁ θάνατος ὁ δεύτερος—and this on the authority of Matt. xxv., last verse; the meaning of which κόλασις, may be found 2 Peter ii. 9–12, and the meaning of which αἰώνιον, Jude 7. This rests on no Socinian quibble. Rev. xiv. 10 is also quoted, but turn to Isaiah xxxiv., where he is threatening Idumea, and examine the context of Rev. ch. xv.–xvi., the pouring out the last temporal plagues on Babylon and the enemies of the Gospel, in the presence of the throne of God (the opened temple), and I think you will acknowledge the verses in chap. xiv. to refer in prophetic language to earthly judgement and not to the final destiny.

“The rich man, Dives, is clearly suffering before the final doom, by the context, so that argues neither way.

“Now excepting these texts there is *not one* in the Bible that does not read off more easily on the theory of absolute destruction of bad men with lingering pain at the day of judgement, leaving their carcasses a spectacle for some time to the nations of the saved. [See Isaiah lxvi. 24.]

“2. Mark that no one pretends to find eternal torments



in the Old Testament, yet all are to be adjudged to them on the common showing. Why were they not there?

"3. If two or three texts are to explain five hundred figuratively, why may not five hundred explain two or three? Answer: Because men are vain of believing terrific lies; a striking, but to my mind, indisputable moral phenomenon; whereas on the one hand it would agree with Natural Religion, and be extremely delightful to see such an indication that God is love; on the other it shows a good, stiff, sinewy, muscular credulity to suppose He will act like a demon.

"Another better answer, and with respect to the majority, a true one, would be: Because so few men ever thought of doubting a doctrine which as Calvinistic infants they suck in with their mothers' milk. It is so tremendous a subject, they think it worthless to search the Scriptures for a proof of it. 'Men never would have added it to the word of God.' Would they not? Look at Popery, Socinianism, and the Church of England, and see whether men will not add and subtract as suits either their lusts or metaphysics.

"4. As far as I can find from the *Apostolic* Fathers, eternal torments are never mentioned. Arnobius, 180 years after John's death, teaches in his book 'Contra Gentes' that the punishment is annihilation with pain, when and where there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

"The natural operation of fire is to burn up, not to immortalize its fuel, but the credulity of an unphilosophical Calvinist will receive even this, without inquiry, for this is the subject of my warfare.

"I account for the introduction of the doctrine by the Platonic falsehood of the necessary immortality of the soul of man, which entered the Christian Church in the fourth century, as you may see in the learned Dodwell on the Soul, a book with a fine title-page. The original doctrine

of the Jewish and Christian Churches of the Old and New Testaments was, I am certain, the mortality of man's soul for Adam's sin, but its possible immortality by regeneration and sanctification. See Job, Genesis ii., Psalms, Proverbs, 1 Corinthians xv., Galatians iv.

"The consequences of this view of punishment I take to be : (1) love to God ; (2) gratitude, unmingled, to Christ ; (3) a strong motive to holiness ; (4) an avoidance of furious zeal on little questions, which arises now from thinking God a tormentor ; and (5) a union on great principles.

"I do not venture to talk in this confident style without feeling an increased conviction of the truth of these views, notwithstanding the mass of popular opinion against them and the manifest disadvantage they will bring to my reputation on earth. Pray and think and read on this subject as much as I have done during the last month, and if you differ at the end, send me reasons. It is either a great truth or a great lie, a useful and encouraging doctrine or a pernicious error. Either I or the theologians have broken the command at the end of Rev. xxii. Modesty might lead any one to suppose almost without examination that himself was in the wrong. But I declare to you that every hour brings me to the contrary conviction. It does give me almost a new life in looking upon the myriads of our fellow-creatures and thinking upon the ages of eternity, that the time is arriving when the good and beneficent Being who is kind to the unthankful and the evil will extirpate all suffering from the universe, by extirpating the causes of it. As for the spirit, the joy, the feeling of the glad tidings with which you preach the Gospel in this view, I cannot, need not describe it. Rejoice in the Lord, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart. Are these suggestions of the Devil? If bad men become worse because they will only be annihilated : mind, this is not the first truth of sacred Scripture which they have wrested to their own destruction ; but it is not

*only* annihilation, the day of judgement is one of fearful agony, a spectacle of horror, a night much to be remembered by the Lord's hosts. The deluge was forty days in drowning that world of the ungodly."

The marvel is that such a letter should have been written by one so young, for at this time Edward White was only a little more than twenty years of age.

Being then too young to think of settling at once in the ministry, at the suggestion of Mr. C. N. Davies, he went to spend a year at Worcester, where his further studies were to be under the guidance of Dr. Redford. While there he became acquainted with the Rev. John Angell James, and formed other friendships which lasted through life. Occasionally also he preached in the villages around.

On his coming of age in 1840, his sister, Mrs. Ranyard, familiarly known as L. N. R., addressed to him a poetic expression of her affectionate interest in him, and in his future career. From it the following lines may be quoted :—

"My brother, thine has been a thoughtful youth,  
A youth of deeper thoughts than most men's age,  
And still, with all thy philosophic lore  
Thou hast a poet's heart, a sympathy  
With all things beautiful, a happy power  
To cull from nature and from common life  
Ethereal essence, and to shed it back  
Into congenial souls. The poet's crown  
Were yet, I deem, too low an aim for thee.  
Thou hast forsaken the paternal hearth,  
The din of traffic and the paths of gain,  
For holier things than these that thou mayest prove  
'Wise to win souls' from the wide realms of sin.  
We touch on solemn times ; division, change,  
Disruption, mark the world's advancing age  
And I oft ponder on thy destiny  
Amidst it all, young aspirant ; with prayer  
That God, who hath bestowed rich gifts of mind,  
And turned that mind towards Himself, may keep  
Thee lowly at thy suffering Saviour's feet,  
And fill thee with His Holy Spirit's power,  
Then use thee as He will.

"My heart doth ache,  
Sometimes, to think how we have lost the light

Of thy perpetual presence. Thou wilt dwell  
No more amongst us, save at intervals,  
And Love's bright chain must spread its links afar ;  
Yet ne'er, dear brother, by our winter fire  
Will we forget thee ; and with thoughts of thee  
The calm retiring light of summer eves  
Shall ever mingle at the hour of prayer."

Gratefully recognizing the helpful influence exerted upon him during his youth by the writer of these lines, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Edward White had the happiness at a later period of being able to render efficient aid to her in her literary and philanthropic labours. In the preparation and revision of her well-known work, *The Book and its Story*, and of her later book, *Stones Crying Out*, he was her counsellor and indefatigable helper. In her long-continued and beneficent work among the London poor, too, he was ever ready to assist either with private counsel or public speech. He rejoiced greatly over the success of the Bible Women's work initiated by her, and in its rapid growth while still under her wise direction and subsequently. Since her death in 1879 that work has continued to progress, and even with increased rapidity, until it has reached its present vast extension as "The London Bible Women and Nurses' Mission," employing ninety Bible Women and sixty efficient Nurses who minister to the poor in their own homes in all parts of London.



## CHAPTER III

### CARDIFF AND HEREFORD

1841-1851; AGE 21-32

THE kind friend and teacher who had guided the youth in his first studies with a definite view to the Christian ministry, Charles Nice Davies, had by this time become Principal of Brecon College. He had not lost sight of his young friend and pupil, and having recognized his sterling qualities and considerable capacity, as well as his stability of character, he proposed, in 1840, that Edward White should go to Cardiff to minister to a small congregation of seceders from the Church at the old Womanby Street Chapel. This charge was undertaken, and young White went there with the determination to do his best to heal the split, and preach the people back again. In this purpose he seems to have succeeded, and to have himself gone with them and preached at Womanby Street.

It was at this period of his career that Mr. White received from the celebrated essayist, John Foster, that long and very interesting and important letter, on questions relating to the future life and the fate of the unsaved, which was published at length in Foster's *Life and Correspondence*, vol. i., and from which a rather long extract may be found in Mr. White's *Life in Christ* (3rd ed., p. 61). That letter, coming as it did from a veteran in the ministry, greatly encouraged him in his determination to study these questions thoroughly,

and to speak out when fully convinced as to what was the true doctrine.

At Cardiff he remained more than a year, gaining several valuable friendships, as well as a beginning of pastoral experience. He was present on the ship with the old Marquis of Bute at the opening of the Bute Docks, which proved the beginning of the phenomenal development of the business and the town of Cardiff, the population having increased tenfold since that time.

The death of his friend C. N. Davies, at Brecon College, on the 22nd January, 1842, was the occasion of Mr. White's next move. He went to Brecon, and with another friend, Mr. D. Blow, accompanied the remains to Hereford, where he conducted the funeral service. The burial took place in front of the Eignbrook Chapel, which had been built through the influence and exertions of Mr. Davies during his pastorate of the Church from 1827 to 1831. It replaced the older one, which dated from the times of active persecution and was inconveniently small. The building thus erected was itself superseded in 1872 by the present one, of a more modern pattern and more commodious.

In speaking of Mr. Davies at the funeral, Mr. White did not fail to acknowledge his own indebtedness to his deceased friend. His speech on the occasion was printed, somewhat abridged, in the *Hereford Times* of the 12th February, 1842, and in 1881 was reprinted in pamphlet form, by one of the Hereford friends, as a memorial of Mr. Davies. It seems to have made such an impression upon Mr. White's brother, George F. White, as to have led him to write to his sister Henrietta a remarkably prophetic letter, dated 27th February, 1842, from which the following is an extract:—

“I have been reading Edward's incomparable memoir of his master. It is impossible to separate the character of the man from the delineation of it by his pupil, or to know which to admire most. I think there can be hardly

another man living who knew Davies well enough to have written it. The question might arise, What did Davies do for his generation? It is well answered by the fact of his having trained one such mind as Edward's. He might have written volumes and preached daily and yet been less useful than he will be proved to have been if, by God's blessing, Edward's life be spared. The feeling with which he regarded him is proved by the touching allusion to his residence with Davies, his regret that it was so short, the value set on his instructions, the deep affection that he entertained for him, and by the important use he has made since of that year's advantage. Depend upon it, Edward is destined to achieve a great work. In many respects he will be as little understood as his departed friend, but he will be a more public man, a more writing man, and if not offensive to say so, a more useful man. The similarity of his own mind to the one he describes is so remarkable that were *his* memoir to be written to-morrow, he has written it himself, if we make due allowance for age, position, and circumstance."

Although some superior persons derided this oration as inflated rhetoric,—an estimate in which Mr. White's own more mature judgement agreed,—it had one effect which was not at all foreseen: it induced the Eignbrook Church to invite the speaker to become its pastor. This call he accepted, and accordingly removed, in March 1842, from Cardiff to Hereford, where he remained as pastor until September 1851, nine and a half years, dwelling in the quaint old manse which still stands close to the present chapel.

While still at Cardiff, Mr. White had published a lecture on "Christian Union," which he had delivered at Newport on the 14th September, 1841. It was occasioned by some discourses of the then Bishop of Llandaff. In this lecture, while vindicating the separation of Dissenters from the ecclesiastical organization of the Established Church, he

argued for the real spiritual unity of all true believers, and for its outward manifestation in community of worship and work. Soon after his settlement at Hereford, he also published a lecture on "The Errors and Omissions of the Church Catechism," the occasion of which was a Bill in Parliament relating to the education of factory children.

It was while at Hereford, too, that he began his contributions to periodical literature. In 1845 he wrote a series of five articles for a publication called the *Weekly Evangelist*, the subject being again "Christian Union." Thus early in his career did he begin to use his literary power and influence in favour of union among all true Christians, a subject which lay very near his heart. An earnest desire for spiritual unity characterized his whole life, and was illustrated even in his latest years when residing at Mill Hill, by his fellowship with the various local bodies of Christians there, and his willingness to allow his name to appear on the Methodist plan as a local preacher.

During the Hereford period also occurred several of the most momentous events in his life, among them his marriage. In 1841 he had written, "A man's marriage is the grand error, or the most useful step, in his whole life." In his case it proved to be the latter. His own account of the circumstances that led to it is, that when he was on a visit to London in 1842, he met at Swanscombe a visitor named Rachel Ainsley Aldersey, "and," he writes, "I persuaded her to become my wife and good angel. After a year of waiting we were married at Chigwell Row on June 6, 1843."

Meanwhile he had been himself solemnly ordained to the Christian ministry at Hereford. The ordination took place on the 18th of August, 1842, but no detailed account of the services has been found. His father was present, and in a letter written the following day and dated, "Bishop's Palace, Hereford" (the said "Palace" being the humble dwelling already mentioned as close to the chapel),



he gave to his daughter, Mrs. Leedham, a few items of interest. He wrote: "Yesterday was a good and happy day. . . . I brought down Mr. John Clayton and Mr. Binney, and Mr. Alderson joined yesterday. Our meeting, I hope, will have the favour of God. The services were conducted with great propriety, ability, and right feeling. Edward is now installed as a Bishop, in the Scriptural sense, not, as we were truly told, as a Diocesan, but as a Pastor and Teacher; and I may gratefully number it as one of my happy days, to see a son thus publicly devoted to God's work, with every prospect of being made useful. I will tell you more details when we meet."

Of the daily life of the new "Bishop" in this obscure pastorate, an interesting idyllic picture is presented in a letter written at Hereford by his sister, Mrs. Ranyard, addressed to their father, and dated June 10, 1844.

"Edward gives you a full impression of a man living a holy life, and intent on leading all over whom he has any influence to dwell upon the world to come and to live as if they had souls. If I ever see him, as I think, should God spare his life, we must rationally expect, in a wider sphere and in the trying sunshine of popular approval, I shall look back to him with the deepest interest 'in his frame' at Hereford, where he is satisfied with labouring to save souls, one by one, and where he appears to have work enough for his physical strength, and to feel perfectly at home. . . . The secret now of his happiness is his practical piety; his heart is improved, I can scarcely believe him to be the same person that he was a year and a half ago. This earnest self-education is now bringing forth its mental fruit too, and the deep and everlasting fount of Scripture is the well at which he daily draws. I have seen more in this visit of the roots of his thinking and of the habit of his mind, than ever before, and hope to follow him as in my position I may. He is a very industrious Bee (in everything except early rising),

and makes honey for himself out of all he sees, hears, and reads, and does not do it now and then, or by fits and starts, but every day and always. There are two drawers full of this honey, which he calls his stock-in-trade (and which will be the foundation, doubtless, in time to come of something that will show to the world what his mind is); and if he were put to the alternative, rather than lose these he would part with his treasury drawer."

Having diligently pursued his studies relating to human immortality during these years, Mr. White has told us that "the result was an ever-deepening conviction that Fontaine's unlearned book set forth the very truth of God—1st, on the nature of man as not necessarily immortal; 2nd, on the result of the Fall as bringing man under sentence of death, in the sense of extinction of all life; 3rd, on the object of Redemption to renew man in the divine image, in the possession of an endless life through union with the Incarnate life of God in Christ; while it resulted, also, 4th, that man out of Christ will utterly perish and die the 'second death' in hell without hope of recovery."

He then goes on to say:—

"I had pretty early discovered that these ideas had a very ancient history; that they were distinctly held and taught by some of the most important of the writers of the second and third centuries; and had been, in whole or in part, revived by a long succession of writers in subsequent ages—most of whom, however, had treated the question erroneously, chiefly as one of future punishment, instead of regarding it as a question on the nature and objects of the Christian redemption.

"Accordingly, after laying the critical and historical evidence which had carried my own judgement before several able friends, who were similarly affected by it, notably before John Foster the essayist, who responded in the celebrated letter published in his memoirs, I published a pamphlet without my name in 1844, entitled, 'What was

the Fall ?'—thus showing that the object was not to affront Christendom by a juvenile or dogmatic denial of its settled beliefs, but to obtain a much-needed thorough discussion of a neglected topic in theology. This pamphlet obtained no success, except a scurrilous and contemptuous notice in the *Evangelical Magazine*."

In 1845, feeling it his duty to set forth the argument in greater fulness, he gave a course of four lectures at Hereford. These were published in the following year as a small octavo volume, entitled, *Life in Christ: Four Discourses upon the Scripture Doctrine that Immortality is the Peculiar Privilege of the Regenerate*. Speaking of this book in 1882, Mr. White said: "It was received, along with Mr. Dobney's work<sup>1</sup> published in the same year, without any serious examination, and with a storm of indignation against us, which plainly showed that my own prospect of further employment in the Congregational ministry was ended. It is difficult to convey to this generation a conception of the vehemence and severity of the condemnation with which these early efforts of ours were met by the English religious public.

"The practical result for myself was exclusion from every Nonconformist pulpit in the land; and I could not conscientiously enter the National Church. One mode alone of continuing in the ministry remained available—to go to London, as the centre of English thought, and to obtain, if possible, some church building where there might be a legal right to preach the Gospel under such conditions as I have described, where these conclusions might be tested and thoroughly sifted amidst the culture and experience of London Christianity."

The publication of this book, *Life in Christ*, may be considered as the crisis of Edward White's career. It committed him to the championship of an unpopular

<sup>1</sup> *On the Scripture Doctrine of Future Punishment*. (London: Ward & Co.)

doctrine, which he had been led, by anxious and prayerful study, to regard as the very truth of God, and it obliged him to face the prospect of bitter opposition. Although the Rev. H. H. Dobney, of Maidstone, had published at about the same time his excellent work on Future Punishment,<sup>†</sup> in which the same doctrine was advocated from a different standpoint, it was not he, but Mr. White, who had to sustain the burden of the controversy thus raised, and of the opposition provoked. He has thus described the immediate effect of the publication:—

“Our two books, and our two selves, were attacked in the religious periodicals of the day with a vehemence and contempt which perhaps betrayed some suspicion of weakness in the assailants. But the good men who wrote against us, and stirred up a popular indignation which resulted in a prolonged excommunication, are now long laid to rest, and we will say nothing of their past behaviour. Nothing except that that noble man, and true friend of the people, Mr. Henry Dunn, Secretary of the British and Foreign School Society, himself a firm believer in Immortality through Christ, undertook our defence as young men against the calumnious attack of the *Eclectic Review*, and showed to the Nonconformist public how unfairly we had been charged with hostility to the Evangelical system.

“For seven years these books, although working beneath the surface, made but one prominent convert to the revived faith of early Christianity. This was Sir James Stephen, then Professor of History at Cambridge, where, as he once told me, he always kept some copies in circulation. In the Epilogue to his *Ecclesiastical Essays* he has plainly expressed his opinion on the necessity for a revision in this department of theology.”

<sup>†</sup> In 1882 Mr. White wrote of this book: “No one has yet answered it, and it cannot, I think, be fairly answered, even by himself, if we are to be guided by the ordinary principles of interpretation.”



The article in the *Eclectic Review* above referred to treats Mr. White's publication as a youthful vagary, an attempt to do that which "requires more than the circumspection, wisdom, and knowledge which usually adorn the years of young men," undertaken without due caution or sufficient warrant. The reviewer speaks of the writer as "very flippant and insulting towards all the teachers of the orthodox system." Although Mr. White's whole case rests upon the proper interpretation of Scripture, it is charged against him that "there is throughout a lamentable deficiency of deference to Scriptural statements, and a constant effort to unspiritualize spiritual things."

Enough has been already said to show how mistaken was such a representation of Edward White's position and purpose, and to prove that, on the contrary, he was a man who had determined, by earnest prayerful study of the Holy Scriptures, to test and regulate all his beliefs and to work out for himself a scheme of doctrine in accordance therewith, independently of the standards current among the Churches, whether Congregational or other. It was thus, by a gradual and painstaking process, fully recognizing the seriousness and importance of the subject, and of the consequences to himself, that he had reached the position indicated in his book. In a similar way, while at Hereford, he became convinced that the Advent of Christ, promised in the New Testament and still expected by the Church, will be *pre-millennial*, and in this conviction he never afterwards wavered.

Another subject to which he devoted careful study at this time, was the doctrine and practice of baptism. Having been born and educated among pædobaptists, at the beginning of his ministerial career he seems to have had no doubts as to the propriety of infant baptism. He not only practised it, but preached in favour of it, or at least prepared a sermon setting forth the reasons why he thought it should be practised. Yet even at this time he

was conscious of some of the abuses connected with it, for in his common-place book, in 1840, he wrote: "What an awful number of lies are told every year in Church baptisms!" His further study of the question led him gradually to the conviction that the arguments on which he had formerly relied for justification of the practice were not valid. In 1844 he wrote, probably with reference to this question of baptism: "We are more likely to be in bondage to our own opinions than to those of any other person, especially to those opinions which we may have formerly defended." Some years later he writes of the importance of bearing testimony against infant baptism, as encouraging the false and dangerous delusion of baptismal regeneration.

By the year 1850 he had become convinced that: "The awful perversion of baptism in infant regeneration over the whole world, renders it imperative upon every Christian to testify against it by personal reception of the rite in mature years." And it was not his way to lay down a rule for others which he was not prepared to observe himself. If the reception of baptism was imperative upon every Christian, it was surely even more so upon every Christian minister. Accordingly he made arrangements for his own baptism, which was administered to him by the late Dr. Gotch at Broadmead Chapel, Bristol, in that year (1850).

About the same time he delivered a long and carefully prepared lecture, also at Bristol, stating, in considerable detail, the reasons why he rejected the practice of infant baptism, whether explained as the actual means of regeneration or not, and pointing out that the explanations given by different representatives of the Independents were mutually destructive, as well as unsupported by Scripture authority. This lecture was published with a rather long title: "The Three Infant Baptisms of Oxford, Glasgow, and Manchester, and New Testament Baptism

for the Remission of Sins, with considerations on their respective bearings on personal religion and the constitution of the Church ; to which is prefixed a Brief Defence both of Immersion and Pouring. A Lecture delivered at the Gallery of the Fine Arts Academy, Bristol. By Edward White, author of Four Discourses on Life in Christ. London : B. L. Green, 1850."

The following extract from this lecture may be worth introducing, as showing how Mr. White regarded the influence of infant baptism on the subjects of it. He said : "Notwithstanding the allegations of a few enthusiastic defenders of pædobaptism as to the benefits which they suppose themselves to have derived from it, I apprehend that of all the influences which act upon us in forming the character, the fact that we were baptized in infancy is the faintest. Circumcision left a permanent mark upon the subject of it, which might remind him of his privileges and obligations. Infant baptism leaves no such mark, either on the body or on the memory. It can be known to the baptized only as a traditionary fact in the family history. If, however, it exercise any influence at all, that influence is likely to be of a pernicious tendency, encouraging the vague idea that there is some other way of becoming a Christian than by personal thought upon Christian truth and personal obedience to it. Not to have been baptized in infancy on the other hand must exercise a positively good influence upon the opening intelligence of children. It would present a far stronger motive to piety to be made to feel that membership with Christ's Church is a high privilege vouchsafed alone to those who design to serve and please God in Christ, and suggesting . . . a feeling of danger while abstaining from personal repentance, obedience, and baptism."

This divergence on his part from the belief and practice of the Congregational Churches generally, made his position at Hereford difficult to maintain, for he could no

longer baptize the infants of the members. He was, however, willing to have them brought into the assembly and solemnly dedicated to God in public with prayer and thanksgiving ; a practice which he continued all through his ministerial course, so far as it was desired.

Some years before this he had written : " Unfortunately innumerable private interests and livelihoods have become entangled in all our theological controversies, rendering the settlement of these infinitely more difficult. See the Church Establishment and the endowments of the Dissenters." This fact had now come home to him in his own experience, and so, in the year following that of his baptism, he determined to resign his charge and seek a position in London in which he might with greater freedom preach and act according to his convictions.

Leaving Hereford, therefore, in September 1851, Mr. White was assured of the sympathy and goodwill of his people there at a crowded public farewell meeting, which was attended by all the neighbouring ministers and reported in the *Hereford Times*. In his speech on that occasion he warmly acknowledged the kindness and forbearance with which he had been treated by them all, with the result that they parted in the most perfect peace and harmony. He said that, in spite of all the secondary opinions which he had divulged in that place, and referred to occasionally in his discourses, he thought he might honestly say that the Gospel as understood by all Christians had been his great theme. Elsewhere he had been known by some secondary opinions, which had created a strong feeling, and to which he did not wish to make further reference, but in Hereford he had been known as putting prominently forward the fundamental truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Some of his characteristic remarks may be here quoted. He said : " All attempts to unite men on details must prove fallacious. If you try to lay down definite principles



and articles as the standard of union, they are sure to lead to all sorts of division. We can only be united upon fundamental truths. . . . I have tried to speak irrespective of consequences. . . . The evil of the present day is compromise for false peace's sake. The great thing is to please God by fidelity to principle. . . . We have just as much hope of eternal glory as we have of Christ, and no more." In closing, he asked their prayers on his behalf, in a far more difficult course than his had been in Hereford. Country preachers when taken to London seemed, like birds, to lose their "wood-notes wild." Many were afraid to speak out. The influence of a great city was almost omnipotent upon the mind, and nothing but the Spirit of God dwelling in a man, filling his mind with the knowledge of Christ, can make him regardless of the opinion of the world. It was only this could make him stand in the evil day. He therefore urged them to pray for him, that he might open his mouth boldly, as he ought to speak.

The measure in which such prayers were answered in his subsequent course will appear in the later portion of this memoir.

On the following day a deputation of the ladies of the congregation waited upon him, and presented him with an elegant gold watch as a testimony of their regard.

On leaving Hereford he went, with his wife and four children, to Swanscombe, where his father found him a house, and he preached there in the school chapel during six months, while waiting for the opportunity to test the value of his personal convictions, by obtaining a place where he might preach freely the Gospel of God's grace and salvation as he now understood it.

The experience of these nine and a half years in comparative obscurity at Hereford had more than one advantage as a preparation for his subsequent work. For one thing, it taught him to speak plain English. Soon after his settlement there, he wrote: "If you wish to learn to

“speak plain English, you must go and preach to a country congregation for a few years.” Another advantage was that it gave him the opportunity of becoming acquainted with Christians of various types, and with their several modes of thought and speech. Hereford, although a Cathedral city, had only a comparatively small population, and he was able to sustain amicable relations with adherents of the Church of England, with Baptists, Methodists, Plymouth Brethren and Quakers, and to gain insight into their differing methods and doctrines. This helped to develop in him that catholicity of spirit, already alluded to, which was one of his leading characteristics in later life.

Although Mr. White had been led to accept the views of the Baptists with respect to baptism, he was not willing to sever his connection with the Congregational body, so long as it might be permitted to continue; and in fact it continued to the end of his life. While agreeing with Baptist principles, he objected to the name, and did not see the necessity for separation from other Christians holding similar views as to Church organization and government. Thus he was never willing to be called a Baptist, and would not allow his name to be retained in the list of Baptist ministers compiled by the Baptist Union.

In this year, 1851, was opened in Hyde Park the first great “International Exhibition,” which was the embodiment of a noble idea of the late Prince Consort, and was inaugurated by Her late Majesty Queen Victoria. After Mr. White’s first visit he thus records the impression that it made upon him: “Went first time to Exhibition. Walked up the nave from the American end. Astounding impression made by the view of ‘all nations’ walking in the grand avenue, seen from the galleries at the end.”

In October of the same year he witnessed Kossuth’s enthusiastic reception in London.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE LONDON MINISTRY

1852 ; AGE 32-33

THE desired opportunity for making a practical test of the doctrine of "Life in Christ," by preaching freely on that basis, was not long delayed. In August 1851 Mr. White had ascertained, through his friends Edward S. Pryce and Frederick Trestrail, that a chapel in Kentish Town, built for the use of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, and known as St. Paul's Chapel, Hawley Road, was disused and available. This chapel Mr. White arranged to take at a yearly rent, feeling confident that, if this thing were of God, eventual success would be sure, although it would inevitably involve many difficulties and much trial of patience, as well as risk of pecuniary loss. If it were not of God, he would be content that it should fail. After having continued the work in that building for thirty years, he preached a sermon in which he told the story of its beginning.

"This building, in its original form, in a somewhat obscure suburb, was the only one that offered. We were not acquainted with a single Christian person in the neighbourhood who would be likely to render assistance. But I committed the cause to God alone, and went forward. No prospect could have seemed more unpromising. We were then alone in London in these beliefs. Devout

men, held in deserved honour, went about warning all who 'valued their immortal souls' not to cross this threshold. For my part I was not sorry for these disadvantages. The movement had begun in incessant prayer for light on this awful problem of man's nature and destiny, in ceaseless study of the sacred Scriptures, and in a willingness to suffer anything in disrepute and loss of promotion, God enabling us, in order to test the truth, and to promulgate it if confirmed. If these ideas were errors, we said, let them be crushed—the sooner the better—by all the weight of public authority and of hostile learned opinion; or let them be smothered by this local obscurity, insignificance, and financial difficulty. On the other hand, we said, if these ideas are true and divine, 'ye cannot overthrow them.' If some few people are found ready to suffer sharply enough, and long enough, in bringing them before the public, they will certainly make way at last; God will fight for them if they are His truth, and will strengthen us, or some one else, to continue the witness, and will supply the needful resources. And if 'these things are so,' He will in time open the eyes of some of His abler servants to see what we, and so many others before us, have seen, and strengthen them to acknowledge the doctrine of Life in Christ as true in itself, and true for the times.

"No sooner was the building opened for worship than some signs of sympathy appeared. Several distinguished ministers, guarding themselves against the supposition of agreeing with us, preached at this re-consecration. A few friendly and heroic souls from a distance, whose hearts God had touched, cast in their lot with us at the very commencement, nearly all previously unknown. These have mostly passed away; a few remain still to enjoy the recollection of their remarkable self-denial and courage, and to join their thanksgiving with ours to-day in the review of the years that have gone by.

"There was this speciality in the establishment of this



congregation, that it was founded in 1852 to do a double work. First, it was founded to fulfil the ordinary function of a congregational society, to 'gather out' of the surrounding population, by the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, 'a people for God's name,' who by joint worship and work might become the instruments of the Holy Spirit for saving other souls, and for helping forward the general mission of the Gospel through the world. This was the chief end proposed in our Church foundation, and I thank God that this has been our chief end ever since. No one who has joined us has ever been asked what was his opinion or belief on any secondary subject ; the only condition of Church-membership has been declared faith in Christ and in the dogmatic authority of His apostles, and a consistent life. We have been glad to welcome the adhesion of persons who agreed with us in important secondary views, but such agreement was not essential, and as a matter of fact only a fractional section of our society has exhibited a strong theological tendency in any direction. It has been this practical spirit of the Church for thirty years which has been its salvation in every sense of the word, for no Church can subsist wholly or chiefly upon controversy, even on matters of the gravest importance. It is the chief comfort of my own reflections to-day that there never was more uncontroversial zeal for the common salvation, never more zeal for the salvation of souls, never more good work done amongst us for young men and women, for the ignorant, for the poor, for the rich, for the surrounding population, for the heathen nations, than at the present time.

"There was, however, a second end to accomplish—and a difficult one—namely, to combine with the ordinary course of evangelization and Church-fellowship here, a public effort to explain, to defend, and to propagate those doctrines on immortal life which long previous study had led us to regard as worthy of all acceptance. It was a

sufficiently entangled undertaking. There was always the danger of giving undue prominence to these specialities ; of which those who disliked them would not be slow to make observation. There was the opposite danger of so concealing them that one chief object of the movement would be sacrificed to the aim of pleasing its adversaries. We have tried to avoid both extremes.

“Whether all that has grown up here and elsewhere throughout the world from these beginnings is to be traced to the good hand of God upon us, or to the aid of the power of darkness assisting a small number of men for thirty years, at great personal loss and discomfort, to enforce and propagate a pernicious heresy, you can judge at your leisure. For my own part, I end these thirty years as I began them by calling God to record that we have been actuated, so far as we know, by no spirit of rebellion against His holy revelations, but by an honest desire to interpret the Bible according to the plain rule of taking its meaning from the most obvious sense of its general expressions, as on all other topics, so on this subject of Life and Death eternal. And at the end of this long period of additional study of God’s Word, of conference with an immense number of scholars of all Churches, and of several nations, of laborious investigation of the ancient and modern literature of the questions concerned (having hereby obtained an acquaintance with the controversy which gives one a certain moderate claim to be listened to, superior at least to that of hasty and trifling notice-writers in religious newspapers and magazines); above all at the end of these thirty years’ experience of the spiritual effects seen in Christians subjected to such teaching, and in alienated souls both ignorant and educated, who have been reclaimed by its influence, I solemnly this day confess again the doctrine which was taught here at first, that man is not represented in the divine revelation as immortal since the Fall, but as a being who has lost the hope of ever-

lasting life, which he can regain only by spiritual regeneration and union with the immortal Son of God. And, therefore, I protest again, with all my heart and soul and mind, against what appear to us still those two opposite errors, both springing from the common root of faith in man's natural immortality: first, against the doctrine of endless torments to be inflicted in hell on unsaved men, whether civilized or barbarian; and, secondly, against the now popular doctrine of the absolute final salvation of all men, good and bad; as directly contrary both to the letter and spirit of the Christian revelation recorded in Holy Scripture."

Possession of the building was obtained in January 1852, and the opening services were held on the 23rd March of that year. At these services the "distinguished ministers" above referred to as having taken part were: Rev. W. Brock, of Bloomsbury Chapel, who preached in the morning of the opening day; Rev. J. C. Harrison, of Park Chapel, Camden Town, who led the prayer; and Rev. John Stoughton, of Kensington, who preached in the evening. Mr. White's own first sermon in the building was on the words, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ" (Rom. i. 16).

In anticipation of the opening of the chapel, seeing that it was to be done on his own personal responsibility, Mr. White had to consider upon what lines he would conduct the enterprise. He wrote at this time in his commonplace-book: "No man can work with all his heart if he habitually conceals half his mind." And again: "'Strong meat' consists of secondary truths. The great truths are 'milk for babes'; these alone sustain life, the others direct it." Further: "Providence seems to have interposed the obstacle of 'circumstances' in order to strengthen character and to develop virtue."

With these ideas in mind, he laid down the following general rules by which he intended to be guided:—

1. Expound every sacred Scripture according to conviction, whether it accord with the most common persuasion or not ; since my opinion signifies to me the probable idea of God.

2. A large presentation of the physical element of religious knowledge. Hitchcock, Dick, &c.

3. No Church, until it appear that there are the elements for a true one ; and no officers, until truly gifted Church governors appear.

4. When a Church does appear, bring it forward very much as the chorus of God in worship.

5. Trust more to the creative than the destructive force of truth for permanent usefulness. "Not blasphemers of your goddess."

6. Attach considerable importance to instruction on secondary opinions for edification of "men in Christ Jesus," but to the great truths for "babes."

7. Always preach on supposition of the distinction between the fleshly and the spiritual ; and finally have the professed disciples separate. Our work not to amuse or gratify a mixed mob—of souls—but to bring out the obedient and to edify the ἐκκλησία.

8. Occasionally lectures on Sunday on important events, and on influential books, good or bad.

9. We sow many seeds to get a few flowers.

With respect to the ordinance of baptism, he made no restriction as to the subject or the mode, but Mr. White himself would not baptize infants. When the chapel was put in trust, later on, the only restriction inserted in the deed was that its administration should not be at the usual times of public worship, but at special meetings to be appointed for the purpose.

Among the "few friendly and heroic souls" who at once associated themselves with this enterprise, a Committee was formed to assist Mr. White in the management, but



there was no formal organization of a Church until the following autumn, when a solemn declaration, dated 1st September, 1852, was prepared and signed eventually by seventeen men and an equal number of women, in the following terms :—

“ We whose names are hereunto subscribed, having been brought by the Providence of God to worship together at Hawley Road Chapel, and being convinced of the propriety of joining ourselves together in the fellowship of the Gospel, for the better discharge of Christian duties, and the fuller enjoyment of Christian privileges, Do hereby resolve so to join ourselves together in humble dependence upon the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in gratitude for the love of God our Father, and in earnest hope of the communion of the Holy Spirit.

“ And thus constituted by our mutual agreement and prayerful resolution into a Church of Christ, we will endeavour henceforward to bear one another’s burdens, and so to fulfil the law of Christ. We will hold ourselves in readiness to strive together for the faith of the Gospel. We will affectionately receive to membership with us any fellow-disciples professing repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. We will maintain the sacred character of the Church, as the holy Temple of God, by the administration of discipline according to the directions, and as far as lies in us in the spirit, of the New Testament Scriptures. And we will watch unto prayer that, as a Church, we may bring forth fruit unto holiness, the end of which shall be incorruption and eternal life.

“ In token of which resolution we hereby attach our signatures, as in the presence of Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and made us unto our God kings and priests. To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

There was no appointment of deacons until some time after the signature of this declaration. Those who were, later on, first chosen for that office were Messrs. Carter, Nalson, Tomkinson, and Barker, who, with their wives, were among the earliest to unite in this enterprise. Mr. and Mrs. John Haddon and Mr. Bourne were also among the early adherents.

The Church when thus formed was still too small and weak to meet all the necessary expenses of public worship, and provide in addition adequate support for the pastor. In order therefore to maintain his family, while gradually gaining the confidence of his neighbours and additional adherents to his enterprise, Mr. White took a house in the vicinity and received young men as boarders, also allowing some other lads to join his own children for the reception of his daily instruction. He continued thus to teach lads at his own home for seven years.

During his early years at Hawley Road, he was for the same reason contributing largely to periodical literature, writing articles, grave and gay, for the *Christian Spectator*, the *Church*, a penny monthly, the *Patriot*, the *Freeman*, started in 1855, and other weekly and monthly publications.

In commencing his ministry in London, it was his fixed determination to make that ministry, as it had been at Hereford, truly evangelical, not controversial; and, as already hinted, he seldom referred in his Sunday sermons to the special controversy on the doctrine of Life in Christ. Nevertheless, his presentation of the Gospel of salvation was necessarily moulded thereby, the subject was constantly in his mind, and he did not fail to use every suitable opportunity of pressing it on the attention of Christian people, ministers especially. A list, written by him in 1853, of six reasons for urging the doctrine may here be introduced:—

1. It gives to minds a tangible apprehension of the

existence and *goodness* of God, delivering them from a vague terror under which all loving thought is impossible.

2. It brings forward the justice of God into vigorous relief, as justice, graduating punishment.

3. It furnishes an answer to the difficulty occasioned by reflecting on the pagan world as abandoned to ignorance, yet destined to eternal torment.

4. It brings out forcibly the distinction implied in regeneration.

5. It takes the teeth out of the jaws of infidelity.

6. It centres all human thought on Christ, on whom all divine thought is fixed as the Elect of the Lofty One.

Thus, while keeping the subject constantly in mind, studying it in all its aspects, and occasionally speaking of it in private, in meetings of ministers, and, though rarely, in public, but abstaining generally from reference to it in his Sunday ministrations, he was gradually gaining a well-earned reputation as an earnest and faithful evangelical minister; and this gave increased force and efficacy to his testimony when the time came for him to make a fresh presentation of his side of the controversy to the Christian public.

## CHAPTER V

### LITERARY WORK

1853-1864 ; AGE 33-45

**B**EFORE he had been long settled in London, Mr. White became known as a popular lecturer. His home and church were within the area of the vast suburban parish of St. Pancras. In 1856 he prepared a lecture upon the story of that saint and martyr, who was the son of a wealthy Phrygian nobleman, who died leaving him an orphan at ten years of age under the care of an uncle. The uncle took him to Rome in the time of the Emperor Diocletian. There they both became Christians. The uncle died, and the young Pancratius, at the age of fourteen years, became a victim of the fierce persecution which then raged. This lecture was delivered first at the Vestry Hall of the parish, on June 24, 1856, and afterwards elsewhere ; and it was published and republished in pamphlet form that same year.

Among the other subjects on which Mr. White lectured in later years were : " A Penny " ; " Mind in Animals " ; " Low Spirits " ; " Thoroughness " ; " Miracles " ; " Westminster Abbey," which he came to know nearly as well as the officials there, having been intimate with Dean Stanley during many years ; " The Story of Kentish Town from the Creation," which was an exposition of the results of an examination of the cores brought out by the boring tubes



in the sinking of an artesian well in the neighbourhood. In like manner he often turned to good account passing events, both local and general. His lectures were in request, not only in London, but also in some of the large provincial towns.

During these early years in Kentish Town he became intimate with the Rev. T. T. Lynch, for whom he had both admiration and affection. The publication of Mr. Lynch's book of devout poetic meditations, entitled the *Rivulet*, was the occasion of an outburst of bitter criticism and invective, on the part of some writers in evangelical periodicals; the author being reproached as a Unitarian—which he was not—and for what was called his “negative theology.” Mr. White was not one to allow his friend to be attacked so fiercely without making some attempt to defend him, especially when the attack was so palpably cruel and unjust as in this case. Accordingly he not only joined in the protest of fifteen principal London ministers against the articles in the *Morning Advertiser*, then conducted by Mr. James Grant, and in the *British Banner*, edited by Dr. Campbell, but he wrote also on his own account in vindication of Mr. Lynch's evangelical sympathies and teaching. If the leaders of this attack failed afterwards to recognize their injustice to Mr. Lynch, many of those who at first agreed with them perceived and acknowledged it. Of the hymns in the *Rivulet* some have become, so to speak, the common property of the Churches, and are to be found in the most evangelical collections. Who now would be willing to lose such hymns as those beginning: “Dismiss me not Thy service, Lord”; “O where is He that trod the sea?”; “Gracious Spirit dwell with me”; “Mountains by the darkness hidden”?

Mr. White's friendship for Mr. Lynch was maintained unimpaired until the death of the latter in 1871, when Mr. White took the leading part at his funeral. At that

time there appeared in the *Spectator* a laudatory notice of Mr. Lynch, contrasting his "marvellous wealth of thought" with the utterances of "the ordinary platitude-mongers of church or chapel," and expressing wonder at the neglect in which he had so long been left, preaching to a small audience in a dismal iron chapel in the Hampstead Road. Mr. White's comment on this article was: "Why did the *Spectator* neglect him all his life time, knowing him so well, but all the while keeping up the story about the lack of 'culture and breadth among the Dissenters'?" And to the Christ-like character and marvellous mental and moral power of Mr. Lynch he paid a gracious tribute in a memorial sermon at Hawley Road Chapel.

During these years Mr. White came into contact with many interesting persons, besides Mr. Lynch and other neighbouring ministers. Thus he met Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe twice in May 1853: once at Mr. Binney's, the second time at New College. In 1856 he went to the reception of Dr. Livingstone at Freemasons' Tavern. In 1858 he met Mr. John Sheppard, of Frome, and visited William and Mary Howitt, whom he had met at one of his own services at Hawley Road, and they told him about their frequent spirit-communications, and showed him drawings, &c., done under spirit influence. He met Mr. Gladstone in 1864 at the house of the Rev. Newman Hall.

In 1854 the Crystal Palace was opened at Sydenham, the Exhibition building of 1851 having been removed thither from Hyde Park. Mr. White was at the opening, and remarked that it seemed to be arranged more for sensuous pleasure than for moral instruction. But he afterwards often resorted to it for recreation, and found it charming on the occasion of a Grisi Concert in 1856. In June 1857 he attended the first Handel Festival there, which he highly appreciated.

From 1860 to 1864 Edward White was Editor of the *Christian Spectator*, a monthly magazine for which he had

previously written a good deal. At this time he was also the principal contributor to its pages, the contents of some numbers having been wholly from his pen. In the issue for February 1860, the second for which he was responsible, an article appeared over the signature D. J. E. on "the Volunteer Rifle Movement," which was then in its infancy. This article, which was strongly in favour of the movement, gave umbrage to some of the supporters of the magazine, and a communication from Mr. Henry Richard, then Secretary of the Peace Society, stating the writer's objections both to the article and to the Volunteer Movement, and covering more than five pages, appeared in the April number. To this were appended some brief editorial notes, in vindication of the general position taken in the former article, maintaining "that the Peace Society is founded on a radical misunderstanding of the respective functions and mutual relations of civil government and Christianity, . . . the old error of confounding the law and the Gospel. The only valid argument against the Rifle Movement must be founded on a proposition which would be wholly fatal to civil government founded on force."

In the succeeding number this brief indication of Mr. White's position in relation to war and the civil power was elaborated in an article on "Law and Gospel : or the respective spheres of Civil Government and Christianity." Beginning with a quaint aphorism from Luther's "Table Talk," it goes on to show that the confusion of the Law and the Gospel, with which the adherents of the Quaker dogma of non-resistance are chargeable, "relates to an illegitimate interchange of the spheres marked out for the two different systems of Divine government respectively by the common author of both. The State is the sphere of Law," in the sense in which Paul uses the word in Rom. ii. 14. "The Church, on the other hand, is the sphere of Gospel. Now what we maintain is that it is as erroneous and absurd to think of regulating the State by the Sermon

on the Mount as it is to legislate for the Church by Act of Parliament." Further on occurs the remark: "What sort of peace at home and abroad could be maintained by a magistrate deprived of 'the sword' it is difficult to conceive. Nor has it ever been shown why, if he is to be divested of 'the sword,' a policeman's truncheon should be left at his disposal." This attitude of the editor, reasonable as it seems, cost the magazine the loss of some of its previous supporters. Mr. White, however, consistently held to it throughout his career. His "Merchants' Lecture," in May 1881 proclaimed his mature opinion on the subject of Law and Gospel, and this was still further explained and enforced in his address as Chairman of the Congregational Union in May 1886.

The year 1862, being the bicentenary of the ejection on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1662, of the two thousand clergy who refused to subscribe in the terms required by the Act of Uniformity, as being contrary to their belief, Mr. White took a considerable part in the discussions that arose in relation to that event and the celebration of it. He wrote largely on the subject, not only in the *Christian Spectator*, but also in the *Nonconformist*, the *Patriot*, and elsewhere. The fact that in our time many men do subscribe to the required declaration, and to the articles of the Church of England, while they do not hold them in their plain grammatical sense, seemed to Mr. White so great an aberration from the way of truth that he had not waited for this bicentenary in order to condemn it. Early in 1860, in a review of a pamphlet by the Rev. Wm. Robinson, of Cambridge, on *The Sin of Conformity*, he had written: "The sin of conformity has continued so long, the sin of conspiracy to make plain words stand for something different from their obvious meaning, that it is questionable whether heaven will put so much honour upon the evangelical clergy" as to induce them to come out from the Establishment altogether. Moreover, in the



same year, in the *Christian Spectator* for August and September, he had caused to be reprinted a long and carefully reasoned address by Mr. Binney, delivered long before, on "Conscientious Clerical Nonconformity," remarking that it had gained rather than lost value since its first publication.

The line that he took in 1862 was to declare with great sorrow and seriousness that there is no such thing as non-personal immorality, and that subscribers in a non-natural sense could not be acquitted of guilt. In this view he was not supported by the majority of Nonconformists, but he was soon cheered by the approval of some of his more judicious friends.

Recognizing as he did that the two thousand ejected ministers were not in principle opposed to the State Establishment, and seeing that the Committee organizing the celebration was composed so largely of supporters of the Liberation Society, Mr. White, while favourable to the celebration, held aloof from the Committee until it was made clear, by a statement from the chair by Mr. Edward Miall, that it was not intended to make it a demonstration against the principle of the Establishment, but only against the required subscription to articles not accepted in their natural sense, and that even those who approved of the connection with the State would be welcomed, if they were willing thus to strengthen the protest against dishonest subscription. Mr. White had thought there was danger lest some of the eager spirits among those opposed to State control should impute their own opinions to the Puritan clergy, and that would have been an offence against historic truth. Having been thus reassured, he gave willing support.

It was in this connection that he came into personal contact with Mr. Edward Miall, and being so favourably impressed with the spirituality of his character and the justice and moderation of his principles of action, he soon

afterwards began to attend the meetings of the "Society for the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control," generally known as the "Liberation Society," of which Mr. Miall was the leading spirit, and it was not long before Mr. White appeared on its platform as a speaker.

When that Society was first formed under the name of the "British Anti-State Church Association," altered in 1853 as above, Mr. White would not join it, mainly because it was a political association, and he was not satisfied as to the spiritual character of its leaders and its operations. While at Hereford he had written out a long series of reasons for not joining the Society. But now that its title had been changed, and he had become acquainted with Mr. Miall, and convinced that he and his principal colleagues were truly spiritual men, he no longer refused co-operation. His previous hesitation had not been caused by any doubt as to the evils inseparable from the State Establishment. As early as 1842 he had written: "The political swamp in which the foundations of the Establishment were laid is buried three centuries deep, and therefore its loathsome nature is not known by the present inhabitants of the building." Then in 1847: "The union of the Church with the State does not so often make the State religious as the Church political." And only two years later: "The controversy between Church of England and Nonconformity is just this: whether in religion we are to be subject to a hierarchy of men, or to the living God revealing Himself in His Word." Again in 1861: "Unless the New Testament idea of the Church, as a spiritual body, be maintained, it is better to have no Church at all; since a corrupt Church is an organized power of evil." In 1862 he wrote three articles in the *Patriot* on what appeared to him as dishonesty on the part of the evangelical clergy. He had thus been gradually preparing to cast in his lot publicly with the Society; and in 1864 he spoke at its annual meeting in

May, on the break-down of the old argument for an Establishment, as maintaining one theology and one morality. In a speech delivered at Cambridge in 1871 he is reported to have thus explained his change of sentiment and attitude : " After observing for many years the course of conduct of the leaders of the Society to be fair and thoroughly characteristic of gentlemen and Christians, and being satisfied that such an organization had more merits than defects, he had become a convert to its ranks. He would proceed with the arguments which had induced him to join this Society. First, because he believed that the separation of the Church and State was essential to the morality of the country ; secondly, to the interest of the English Church as a Protestant institution ; thirdly, to the working of the State ; fourthly, to the rights of Dissenters ; and, lastly, to general society." In subsequent years he took prominent parts in meetings and conferences arranged by the Society in London and elsewhere.

In 1862 Mr. White visited Lancashire, and while there he was deeply moved by the distress caused by the Cotton Famine which had resulted from the American civil war. He was also much impressed with the patience with which that distress was endured by the people. He soon went again, carrying some gifts to relieve the distress, and on returning from this second visit he wrote to his old friend Mrs. Eliza Cannings, under date of December 17, 1862, thus :—

" I ought to have written to you last week, but I was so busy in Lancashire that there was no time. I took your things with me and gave them to Mr. Waters, Chairman of one of the Manchester district Reliefs, who will take care that they go to suitable people. It is sad to see how almost any quantity of money and clothing is swallowed up in the tremendous vortex of Lancashire destitution, and leaves the great abyss yawning for more." He also wrote an article entitled, " The Silent Mills of Lancashire,"

describing the great distress, and the various methods of relief adopted, the sewing schools, &c. This article he introduced to the readers of the *Christian Spectator* with the remark that he thought it might be profitably presented to them at the approach of winter. And the Rev. Charles Williams,<sup>1</sup> of Accrington, testifies that the effect of this publication was to call forth generous response from hundreds of readers. "Many a burden was made lighter, many a heart was cheered, many a home was brightened, many a housewife renewed her faith and hope, and many a man fought his battle more bravely and with greater confidence in final victory through the loving and considerate ministrations of Mr. White."

The Rev. George Clayton died in 1862, and Mr. White assisted at his funeral, paying thus his last respects to his first pastor, whom he described as having been, while in life, "dignified as a Roman statue."

With so many occupations involving constant attention and much mental activity, occasional recreation was absolutely needed. Accordingly, in order to obtain complete change of scene and surroundings, Mr. White made several excursions on the Continent, as well as visits to various parts of our own land. In 1854 he went to Havre, Rouen, and Paris; in 1856 to Amiens and Paris; in the following year to Normandy and Boulogne, his family sharing the sojourn of some weeks at Boulogne, during which his two boys had a narrow escape from drowning. In 1859 he was again in Paris for a time. In 1861 he had a pleasant time in Switzerland, with his sister, Mrs. Ranyard, and in 1863 he again spent a few days in Paris.

In September 1860 Mr. Vine Hall, father of Newman Hall and author of *The Sinner's Friend*, died; Mr. White was present at his funeral, and gave an address. In April 1861 he was at the opening of the Metropolitan

<sup>1</sup> See his contribution to Appendix A.



Tabernacle, having a great esteem for Mr. Spurgeon as an earnest and successful preacher of the Gospel, although on some theological questions they were opposed to each other.

An illustration of Mr. White's skill in the use of irony as a controversial weapon may be here introduced. It was a contribution to the discussion of the question of Church Rates, in the form of an imaginary addition to the eighteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. It was therein narrated how Paul as Bishop of Achaia caused a Church Rate to be made and levied upon the Jews and upon the Gentiles and upon the Church of God ; how the ruler of the Synagogue refused to pay, saying, Lo ! are not all these Nazarenes ? and I believe not their words ; how his goods were seized and sold in the market-place ; and how Paul rewarded the churchwardens who had effected the seizure by the appointment of the son of one of them to a parish with light duty and the son of the other to a living in Macedonia. All this was described in New Testament phraseology, divided into verses, and set forth as being the translation of an ancient Greek manuscript then lately discovered in the library of Hereford Cathedral, and as intended for the edification of conscientious members of the Church of England and the conviction of schismatical dissenters. So skilfully was this done that a Hereford verger, not perceiving the irony, had a copy exhibited in his window as a justification of the imposition of a Church Rate being then made in that city.

The year 1864 was specially memorable in Mr. White's life on account of two important events. The first of these was the decision to undertake the renovation, enlargement, and embellishment of the chapel in Hawley Road, which at that time was both unattractive and uncomfortable. The interior was arranged, as was usual with chapels of Lady Huntingdon's Connexion, with a high pulpit at one end and a lower reading-desk on each side of it. The pews were straight and high backed, and the whole was

enclosed within bare whitewashed walls. In the latter part of this year it was determined to acquire the remainder of the long lease under which the property was held, and then to make the building both attractive and commodious ; and this purpose was carried out in the following year.

The second memorable event of this year was Mrs. White's death, which occurred on December 11th. A man's home-life has an important influence upon his public life and work, and home sympathy is ever a source of inspiration and power. So it had been in this case. It is impossible to tell how much that gifted and gracious lady's quiet and unobtrusive help, and her gentle yet powerful influence, contributed, both in home and church, to the accomplishment of the wonderful amount and excellent quality of the spiritual and literary work done during those early years of the London ministry.

That closest of home ties which, for twenty-one years, had bound him to his wife was now sundered, and he was obliged to forego the help and stimulus of her companionship, which had been to him of such great value. His own estimate of home may be gathered from the following words written by him in 1853 :—

“A love of home is one of the most sacred passions which can illuminate the sanctuary of the human breast, and happy are they whom neither adverse circumstances, nor disastrous misalliances, nor the ravages of death hinder from enjoying the best blessing which remains on the blighted earth. For a true home has repose for its foundation and love for its top stone. It is the abode of ‘peace on earth.’ It is consecrated by the sanctities of marriage, by the sweet innocence of childhood, by the holy sympathies of joy and sorrow, by the longing hearts of scattered families, who turn thither as to the centre of their mortal life, and by its typical resemblance to the heavenly mansions of eternal rest.”

## CHAPTER VI

### HAWLEY ROAD CHAPEL

1865-1869 ; AGE 45-50

THE renovation proved to be a complete transfiguration of the building ; and the necessary preliminaries occupied a considerable time, and a good deal of Mr. White's attention. The lease of the chapel was acquired in January, 1865, but the arrangements for carrying out the alterations were not complete until the end of May. On Sunday, June 4th, the last services were held in the unaltered chapel, and on the following day the work was begun by the removal of the high, straight-backed pews, and, with the exception of a short interruption through a strike among the workmen, it went on steadily until in September it was finished. On Saturday evening, 23rd September, the chapel could be lighted up, and on the Tuesday following the re-opening celebrations began, and the sermon in the morning was preached by the Rev. Samuel Martin, from the words : " I will take the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord." In the evening there was a public meeting, at which addresses were given by neighbouring ministers.

On the first Sunday in the renovated sanctuary, October 1st, Mr. White himself preached in the morning, from the words of John iii. 16, those words being visible in the apse to all the congregation. In the evening the service was

conducted by Rev. J. Stoughton, of Kensington. On the succeeding Sunday morning the pulpit was occupied by the Rev. Thomas Binney. The Revs. Newman Hall and H. Allon conducted some of the subsequent services.

The result of this renovation was a practically new chapel, the interior especially forming a striking contrast to its previous plain and forbidding appearance. The style and decoration were indicative of Mr. White's ecclesiastical attitude and taste. Where formerly the pulpit had stood an apse was added, in which the communion table was placed, while the pulpit was removed to the outer corner of the apse near the vestry door. Delicate shades of colour were introduced on the walls, and the apse was embellished with brighter colours, and inscriptions in gilt letters. On the wall of the apse facing the congregation, under the semicircular arch, in the curved border is the sentence: "Thou art the King of glory, O Christ." In the space enclosed by this border and the horizontal line dividing this semicircle from the lower part of the wall is the text (John iii. 16), "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." The lower surface of this wall of the apse is divided by upright pilasters into three compartments. In the first of these is the Apostles' Creed; in the middle one, texts relating to the Lord's Supper and Christ as the Bread of Life; in the third: "Ye are come unto Mount Sion," &c. (Heb. xii. 22-25). On the front of the gallery, erected on three sides of the building, are the words in large letters: "Therefore with angels and arch-angels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious name, evermore praising Thee, and saying: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Glory be to Thee, O Lord most high."

The seats throughout had been fixed at an angle that



enabled their occupants to sit at ease, and it is fair to say that a pleasanter, more tasteful, and even elegant as well as comfortable place of worship could not easily be found.

The cost of this work, including the purchase of the lease, was nearly £4,000. Towards this the congregation contributed generously; but a large proportion of the money was raised by Mr. White himself outside his Hawley Road connection. The building was in the hands of the workmen for more than three months, and during that time he had opportunities for sometimes listening to brother ministers in London, sometimes preaching for them, and sometimes preaching in other parts of the country; and of trying here and there to obtain monetary aid for his enterprise.

At this time Mr. White was carrying out another building scheme in Tufnell Park, where he had planned to have a house built for himself, near that in which he then resided, on a vacant piece of ground from which there would be a wide stretch of country visible as far as Highgate Church. The house thus built, which he called "Brathay House," was completed in the following spring, and into it he removed on March 19, 1866. In that house he continued to reside until after his retirement from the pastorate at Hawley Road.

Mr. White had gradually attained recognition, outside his own communion, as a growing power in the religious life of London. The Rev. Christopher Nevile invited to dinner on March 22, 1866, at the Westminster Palace Hotel, a company of representative men from the ranks of the Church of England, Nonconformity, and Scientific Research, in order to bring men of such widely divergent views and tastes and sympathies into pleasant social contact, which would be likely to promote a better mutual understanding among them. Mr. White was one of the guests, and the rest of the company included such well-known men as Lord Ebury, Lord Houghton, Dean Stanley,

Hon. Mr. Kinnaid, Messrs. E. Miall and Samuel Morley, Revs. Dr. Vaughan, Dr. Angus, T. Binney, Newman Hall, H. Allon, Charles Williams, Sir S. M. Peto, Sir John Lubbock, Professors Tyndall, Huxley, and Hensley. It was probably as a comment on this gathering together of so many heterogeneous personalities that Mr. White at that time remarked :—

“I never hear the wind blowing near a great city without thankfulness, or considering how necessary is such a movement of the air to drive away the accumulations of carbon which overhang the homes and pervade the breathing space of so many millions. In the same way controversy is the salvation of the popular mind. You do not like the wind? Then go in doors, but do not fail to prophesy in its favour and say: ‘Come from the four quarters and breathe upon these slain that they may live!’”

In August of the same year Mr. White attended the meetings of the British Association at Nottingham, and listened to the exposition of the most recent phases of scientific research in Geology, Astronomy, Chemistry, and Geography. But while thus attentive to the proceedings of men of science, and their attitude in relation to Christianity and the future life, he was not unmindful of the condition of those in the lower strata of society and the alienation of so many of them from the Churches of Christ. For a long time he had been seriously concerned at the general repugnance with which skilled artizans regard the services of Christian Churches of all the denominations, and he had made various efforts to win them. He was well aware of numerous exceptions, especially in some of the dissenting Churches, many very useful members of which are of that class, but he knew also that the majority remained outside.

In November 1866 he published, in several newspapers, a letter in which he called attention to the fact just mentioned, and suggested that a meeting should be

convened in which there should be a representation as far as possible of the non-churchgoing artizans, and of the clergy and laymen of various Christian Churches, for the purpose of free and friendly conference, in order to ascertain the extent and causes of the alleged general alienation of skilled workmen from existing religious institutions. This letter raised a good deal of interest in the subject ; private meetings of friends were held, and it was decided to make an attempt to carry out the proposal.

The first step taken was to bring together about a dozen representative working men, and a similar number of clerical and lay members of Christian Churches, at Ander-ton's Hotel. At that meeting a joint Committee was formed, in order to arrange for a larger and more public Conference to be convened by circular. The names appended to that circular of invitation included those of such well known and representative men as Canon Champ-neys, J. Baldwin Brown, Dr. Guthrie, Newman Hall, Thomas Hughes, J. M. Ludlow, Edward Miall, F. D. Maurice, Samuel Morley, G. M. Murphy, Goldwin Smith, and Edward White, together with those of half a dozen working men of various trades. The large room of the London Coffee House, capable of accommodating about three hundred persons, was secured, and invitations were issued to Christian ministers and laymen on the one hand, and to working men on the other, in about equal number.

The Conference was held on January 21, 1867. It began soon after two o'clock and, with a break of about half an hour when tea and coffee were served in an adjoining room, continued until ten, when there were still a number of names on the list of those prepared to speak, but it was not thought desirable to further prolong the discussion, which had to a large extent served its purpose.

The chair was occupied by Mr. Edward Miall, who in his opening speech struck the right keynote, which maintained the harmony of the proceedings. He asked for

plain speech, freely uttered, but without bitterness or imputation of unworthy motives, the purpose of the meeting being to gain a better understanding of each other's feelings and position with regard to the very important question before them. There was to be no resolution proposed, and no vote taken, except as to the order of the proceedings and the length of speeches, which were limited to ten minutes. About forty persons spoke, and there was a very free interchange of opinion, and of question and answer. Many reasons were given by the artizans for their abstention from religious worship in the Churches, some of which were shown to be mistaken, while others were admitted as of some force, and indicative of needed changes in the methods and habits of the Churches.

Dean Stanley asked if the working classes present could, either themselves or through any body else, give him any notion how the services in Westminster Abbey could be made more available and more useful to them. Any practical suggestion of that sort would be the greatest gratification to him.

Mr. White, who was the originator of the Conference, told how he had been led to move in the matter by a question asked by a worthy clergyman in the West of England, as to the reason why the Dissenters succeeded better than the Church of England in securing the sympathies of the working people. He had expressed doubt whether his questioner was correct in his assumption, believing that, with the exception of the Methodists, the Dissenters generally were not more successful than the Church of England clergy. But the question set him thinking and inquiring, and this Conference was one outcome of his inquiry. He believed that the artizans were jealous of the middle classes, on account of their own exclusion from the political influence of the franchise enjoyed by those classes, and he hoped that the removal



of that political exclusion would break down the principal barrier between the working community and the church-worship of England. Other speakers had given abundant utterance to other causes, but he thought this one ought not to be overlooked, as its removal would be likely more than anything else to conciliate attention to Christianity, and remove prejudice.

When Mr. Miall was obliged to leave, at his suggestion Mr. White took the chair and presided over the remainder of the meeting.

The chief importance of this Conference, with its free interchange of views and opinions, was that it led to many others of a somewhat similar character, in that and the succeeding years, in which Mr. White took part, and at which various moral, religious, political, and ecclesiastical questions were freely discussed. In this way he won the ear and the confidence of the artizan class in a higher degree than most ministers. He also delivered at Hawley Road Chapel a series of lectures on "The Reasons and Excuses given by intelligent Mechanics for not going to Church," dealing in turn with such topics as these: "The mercenary character of the ministers of Christianity, who get their living by teaching it"; "The Difficulty of knowing what is true, through the multitude of opinions"; "The horrible Doctrines taught"; "The need for fresh air, rest, and enjoyment on Sunday, which are not to be had in Church"; also one on "The bad characters of Church-goers," considered as an excuse. In following years he gave occasional lectures specially addressed to artizans, and the success of these efforts led him afterwards to institute the regular monthly Sunday evening lectures which became so great an influence for good in Kentish Town and the neighbourhood.

In this and the following year Mr. White also took part in meetings and conferences of the Liberation Society, some of these being with working men, and some having

special reference to the disestablishment of the English Church in Ireland, which was then impending.

In 1867 Mr. White published an octavo book, of 443 pages, entitled, *The Mystery of Growth, and other Discourses*.<sup>1</sup> Of this book one of his friends said, that it was "One of the books destined to retain a place in the sermons of this generation." It contained a number of selected addresses, many of which had previously appeared in the *Christian Spectator* or other periodicals. These discourses contain much original thought, and they have a very practical bearing. The first of them gives its title to the book. They are arranged under five heads, viz.: 1. Discourses on the Elements of Faith; 2. Discourses on the History and Character of the Lord Jesus Christ; 3. Discourses on some of the Christian Doctrines; 4. Practical Discourses on Personal Character; 5. Discourses on Matters relating to the Church. The last of these is a careful and moderate statement of the arguments for and against Conformity with the Church of England.

As an illustration of the practical quality of one among these addresses, the following extract may be given from the Log of Captain Horne, in the *Unicorn*, bound for Kurrachee in 1868:—

"Sunday, June 14th. Calm, scarcely a breath of wind has been felt the whole of the last night. . . . The crew being seated under the quarter-deck awning, read 4th chapter of James and a discourse by the Rev. Edward White on 'the Reality of Man's Intercourse with his Maker.' No congregation could be more attentive than the one on the deck of the ship this morning. And while duties, privileges, and the certainty that God will draw nigh to us were set forth in plain but forcible language, their attention never seemed to flag. Amidst the calm of the Sabbath,

<sup>1</sup> London, Elliot Stock, Second Edition, R. D. Dickinson, still on sale,

and the calm of the surrounding sea, one might have heard a pin drop. Surely it was too valuable a lesson ever to be forgotten."

On the 29th August, 1867, Mr. White was married at Croydon to Miss Mary Gillespy, who became his faithful, affectionate, and helpful companion until his life's end.

In October of the same year his father, who had greatly aided and encouraged him throughout his career thus far, died at Blackheath at the ripe age of eighty-three.

The Rev. Henry Solly, of the Working Men's Club and Institute Union, had taken part in the Conference with working men already narrated, and on 15th January, 1868, a meeting was held for his installation at Cambridge Hall, Newman Street, Mr. Thomas Hughes presiding. At that meeting Mr. White spoke upon the second resolution, which was in favour of Sunday evening lectures. He first referred to the true and false craft of the priest; the false leading to the destruction of individual thought, the true to its liberation and development; and he urged that these two should not be confounded any more than King-craft and State-craft. Then as to the resolution, which stated that there was a deficiency in practical teaching in the Churches, he admitted that it was partly true, but asserted that it was partly false, because much of the teaching in the Churches was more reasonable than could be known by those who do not attend them. He then expressed the conviction that it is allowable and proper to utilize Sunday as proposed in the resolution. He thought that the English people needed to understand that Sunday is a day for teaching them the whole of their duty. Performance of duty should be based on knowledge of facts, laws, and relations; and these should be taught to the people on Sundays. Lectures therefore should be given on (1) physical laws; (2) social relations, politics—not party politics, but the claims and dues of the various classes; and (3) religion, for Christianity is founded on facts, not on

a series of abstractions, but on a course of facts, which ought to be recognized and understood. He thus enunciated the principle on which he acted in his Sunday afternoon Readings for Working Men, and subsequently with greater success in his regular monthly Sunday evening Lectures to Artizans in Hawley Road Chapel.

In the autumn of 1868 was published Mr. White's book *On Some of the Minor Moralities of Life*.<sup>1</sup> The sparkling essays of which it consists were contributed to the *Christian Spectator* during his time as editor, and were now republished as a handy little book of 250 pages, in good clear type, making a suitable and convenient Christmas or New Year's gift book. A few of the titles given to these essays will sufficiently indicate their character: "On the Duty of returning Borrowed Articles"; "On Simplicity and Affectation, or the Natural History of the Minx and the Swell"; "On the Duty of delivering Kind Messages"; "On the Duty of Speaking and Reading distinctly"; "On keeping Secrets"; "On going too fast and too far"; "On Attention to the Festive Element in Life"; "On Fireside Amenities."

At the end of this year arrangements were made for obtaining a lease of the house next to the Chapel, and building a Schoolroom on the garden at the back, as the Sunday School had outgrown the available accommodation. The work was begun in December, and on February 21, 1869, the Sunday School occupied the new room. On the 23rd a meeting was held in it to celebrate the opening, several neighbouring ministers taking part.

In June and July 1869 Mr. White spent six weeks in France, Switzerland, and North Italy. Returning by way of Dieppe, he had a long conversation on board the steamer with a Roman Catholic priest on subjects ethical, doctrinal, and ecclesiastical. His comment thereon is:—

<sup>1</sup> London, Elliot Stock, 62, Paternoster Row. Still on sale.



“ This long conversation, on the quiet green water, was a strange and fitting conclusion to a journey in which we had seen so much of the power and influence of Rome. The final impression was, that no external argument would shake that marvellous fabric. They start from the idea that Christ promised to be with His Church to the end, and that the Catholic Church is the Church, and after that you are helpless. The individual mind is the organ of the Catholic Church, and when brought up in it, as he has been, doubt is almost impossible. Indeed, I never felt more strongly how impossible it is for conversion of priests to occur except through a spiritual illumination which would give a new starting-point. Increased wonder at the Reformation, however it occurred ! Increased sense of the evils of disunion among Protestants.”

The recent remarkable exodus from the Roman Church of French priests may be noted as illustrating the correctness of Mr. White's observation, these men having been impelled by “ spiritual illumination ” to quit the Roman communion and enter upon a larger liberty.

The Bill for the Disestablishment of the Church in Ireland was passing through Parliament at this time, and Mr. White took a lively interest in its progress, and attended various conferences on the subject in connection with the Liberation Society. The Bill received the Royal Assent on the 26th July, and so became an Act. At a private conference with Mr. Gladstone held at Rev. Newman Hall's Surrey Chapel manse, some two years later, a remark having been made that “ the great Irish remedy ” would be some day applied to the Church in England, Mr. White observed, that no one knew when any thing will happen in England, so many influences being at work. Mr. Gladstone assenting to that observation, added that the Irish Church was upset by Brooks's murder and the Clerkenwell explosion—not by fear—but these acted as a force which rendered action possible.

While still editor of the *Christian Spectator*, Mr. White had published in that periodical a series of seven articles, from his own pen but without his name, containing pungent criticisms of some aspects of English Nonconformity. In response to a general desire he republished these as a small book of 142 pages, entitled, *The Customs of the Dissenters*, still without his own name, although no one acquainted with his mode of thought and style of composition could have doubted his authorship. Himself a staunch Dissenter, he was painfully conscious of some defects of his fellow Dissenters, and of frequent differences between theory and practice among them. In these essays he sought to make them sensible of these, as he was himself, and so to raise the standard of actual life among them to the true scriptural level. Many of the thoughts thus set forth, relating to ideal Independency, admission to church membership, equality among the brethren, church finance, appointment of ministers, conduct of public worship, &c., were more fully enunciated by Mr. White in after years ; some of them appear in other chapters of this book.

In August 1869 Mr. White was writing leading articles on Disestablishment and cognate subjects for the *Non-conformist*. At the same time he was engaged in a correspondence in the *English Independent*, arising out of his pamphlet, then recently published, on *Missionary Theology*. This helped to prepare the way for the further discussion of the doctrine of "Life in Christ," which arose in the following year out of his letters to the *Christian World*.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE "LIFE IN CHRIST" CONTROVERSY

1870-1875 ; AGE 50-56

AT the beginning of the year 1870 the conductors of the *Christian World* considered that the subject of the future life and its conditions was so largely in the public mind, that it would be wise to allow it a place in their columns. Arrangements were made with representative men for statements of the three principal doctrines held by evangelical Christians. Mr. Spurgeon was invited to expound the doctrine of the eternal continuance of suffering for the unsaved, but he declined. The invitation was then given to Dr. Angus, an older man, and one who, on account of his learning and experience, might be considered more competent to deal with such a disputed theological question, and he accepted it. The Rev. Andrew Jukes was the representative of the believers in universal salvation ; and Mr. White was the efficient exponent of the doctrine that immortality is to be the portion of those only who obtain it through the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Each of these champions was allowed space for three letters, in three succeeding issues, and they were to be expository of the writers' own views, and not controversial.

Mr. White's three letters began the series. Of these the first was published in the issue of February 11th. It con-

tained a concise statement of the doctrine, as held by himself, and a considerable number of Christian believers in this country and elsewhere ; and also of the principles of interpretation by which the doctrine has been deduced from Holy Scripture. The principle applied in order to determine the true meaning of Scripture,—the historico-grammatical,—is the one which has governed orthodox Christendom in dealing with all other subjects. It might be thus stated : That the meaning which comes out from the literal sense of the main current of expressions employed in the document, shall always be taken as the ruling sense, so that every seemingly exceptional phrase, or passage, is to be explained in accordance with that "ruling sense." In support of this principle the words of Richard Hooker are quoted : " There is nothing more dangerous than this licentious and deluding art, which changeth the meaning of words, as alchemy doth, or would do, the substance of metals, making of anything what it listeth, and bringing in the end all truth to nothing." After illustrating the application of this principle to the words used in the New Testament to denote the fate of impenitent sinners, and indicating their use in classical Greek literature, Mr. White contends, " that the leading words in the Greek Testament must be taken in the sense which they bore in all other Greek literature. If the principal words of the Greek Testament do not signify what they signify elsewhere, then the Greek Testament, being given in an unknown tongue, was not a revelation to the Greeks." He further points out, that " the figures employed to denote future punishment agree with the literal sense of the words most commonly used to describe it, and do not agree with any other notion."

His second and third letters Mr. White devotes to the consideration of the principal objections that have been raised against the doctrine advocated. They are chiefly these : 1. That it is a novelty ; 2. That it is opposed to



certain statements of the Bible ; 3. That it is a doctrine of evil influence on both saints and sinners. Of these objections the first two are dealt with in the second letter, the last being reserved for fuller treatment in the third letter.

That the doctrine is no novelty, but was taught by the early Christian fathers, is shown by a long passage from Irenæus, who was only one remove from the Apostle John, Polycarp being the link of connection between them. Also by quotations from Justin Martyr and Arnobius. And the reader is reminded that, after ages of corruption, every genuine Christian doctrine will be a novelty to the generation that first effectually hears it.

On the objection, that the doctrine is contrary to some statements in the New Testament, especially to passages in Matt. xxv., Mark ix., and Rev. xiv., Mr. White, in his second letter, makes three preliminary remarks : 1. That any valid objection to this doctrine ought to be addressed to the principle of interpretation set forth in his first letter ; but to assail that is to assail the very basis of Christianity ; 2. That it is inconceivable that any paramount truth of revelation, such as would be the endless misery of unregenerate men, can have been set forth before the world in a vast and various revelation, in such a manner that it can be deduced only from three ambiguous passages, which, if absent, would leave the Bible silent on the subject ; all of these being found in close juxtaposition with other passages giving the plainest categorical contradiction to the idea ; 3. That each writer is best explained by a careful consideration of his own phraseology.

The passages in question are then examined, and shown to be capable of the most reasonable construction in accordance with the doctrine defended. It is, however, admitted that some might be open to the interpretation so generally put upon them, but only on the unwarrantable assumption of man's natural immortality, which

is nowhere taught in Scripture; and even on that assumption, they do not necessarily require such an interpretation.

Mr. White's third letter is on the influence of the doctrine, in reply to the objection, so often made, that it is dangerous to the spiritual interests of mankind. He begins by asserting that the one sufficient answer to the objection would be, that truth is never dangerous and that the truth of a Scripture doctrine can be ascertained by one method alone, *i.e.*, by applying to the Bible the general laws of honest interpretation. But he goes on to state that this is not the sole defence relied upon in meeting the objection; and he proceeds to indicate some of the advantages that would be gained by the general acceptance and promulgation of the doctrine which he holds to be divine truth. He gives reasons for the opinion that the influence of belief in this doctrine would be generally, as in many cases it has been, to deliver from much superstitious dread of the future; to strengthen the faith, the hope, and the love of all God's servants, as revealing His true character, and exhibiting a prospect that will bear thinking of; to help faith in the Christian system of truth as a whole, bringing the details into harmony with each other; to aid resistance to the powerful seductions of the now fashionable theory of the salvation of all men, which involves practically giving up the Bible; to promote the hope, joy, and love of the spiritual life in those who possess it, as rendering the moral character of God no longer incomprehensible, as it is under the long-prevalent doctrine; as well as to aid powerfully in the work of awakening souls sunk in torpor, and in converting wicked men to Christ; because what is most needed for that purpose is a doctrine which, while terrible to evil doers, is yet both credible and real. The letter closes thus:—

“I present these considerations, for years successfully stifled by literary managers, to the vast audience which

you have invited me to address, and in their presence earnestly beseech the examination of these arguments by competent critics ; by critics whose competency does not consist only in a knowledge of the popular tastes, but in an adequate knowledge of the contents of the Scripture, in some proved ability to confront ignorant clamour, and to withstand the anathemas of pope-ridden priesthoods, at any cost, when duty calls. To none but such shall I pay the slightest attention. This controversy awakens the deepest feelings of which mankind are capable, and it is well for all concerned in it to avoid needless provocation, but there is no subject better worth examining to the foundation. The strife is not for our victory or defeat, but for men's faith in Christianity, for souls, and for the everlasting salvation of the world."

These letters were promptly reprinted in pamphlet form, with a characteristic dedication to Mr. Spurgeon which is well worthy of being here reproduced :—

"MY DEAR SIR,—I dedicate these letters to you, not because, with characteristic zeal, you denounced them beforehand in the *Christian World*, (when only one of them had been published), as fitted to 'gratify infidels and harden careless hearts,' nor because I think it likely that a man so early and so deeply committed by unexampled rhetorical triumphs to a popular theology, will prove an easy convert to what you erroneously call 'new views' —(they are, as I have here shown, the 'views' of Irenæus, the spiritual son of Polycarp, the disciple of the Apostle John, to go no higher),—but, frankly, because I regard you as one of the most sincere and consistent preachers of the doctrine of the eternity of evil, and am rejoiced to believe you possess that rare courage and honesty which would, if conscience compelled you, not scruple to say, 'I have unconsciously been deceiving myself and the people.' Allow me to assure you, on the other hand, that although

you declined to controvert my statements in the *Christian World*, I shall carefully note whatever you write elsewhere; and there is no one from whom, (notwithstanding a tone of absolutism somewhat resembling that of Pope Pius IX.) I would more readily learn than from yourself. You know me also, I think, well enough to believe that I would not stand fencing in support of verbal quirks and evasions, if you or any other person can show our arguments to be no better. My whole life has been a sacrifice to conscience on this question, as you also very well know—gain, repute, and good-fellowship having been abandoned for what has seemed to be truth and duty. I think I deserve at least respectful treatment even from you, who have had so much more success. And what am I asking for, after so many years of trouble?—*a solid common-sense defence* of the method of interpretation which takes the ordinary language of the Scripture on future punishment in a signification contrary to its natural meaning. If it is our duty to God to take the verb ἀπόλλυμι, *to destroy* (as in Matt. x. 28—‘Fear Him who is able to *destroy* both body and soul in hell’), in the sense of inflicting eternal misery, contrary to all known Greek usage elsewhere, you, who are the chief preacher on earth of that duty, ought to be able to give *plain reasons* to honest minds of all orders—such, for example, as those of Dr. Weymouth, or Dr. Mortimer, or Mr. Minton, or Dr. Leask, or Mr. Sheppard of Frome, or the undersigned, which will satisfy them therein. We shall make no needless difficulties. If we were to say that *Life* signifies *a happy dissolution of being*, you would call on us for proof; and if we refused it, you would denounce our audacity in unsparing terms—and rightly. Can you expect us to believe you without proof, when you tell us that *destruction* signifies *living for ever in misery*? It seems to me that if *Death* means *life in misery*, *Life* ought to mean *a happy destruction*. The words would then be treated by one and the same rule.



If you quote Matt. xxv. 46 as decisive of the doctrine of endless misery, we quote Matt. x. 28 as decisive against it; and you must excuse me for saying that the question will not be set at rest by a pulpit thunderbolt, or by disingenuously talking of 'dragging the great "truth" of the judgement to come into the arena of debate in a newspaper.' The only difference between the 'arena' of the *Christian World* and that of the *Sword and Trowel* is this, that in the former your assertions on what you think the 'truth' could be answered, if necessary; in the latter they cannot.

"I trust it is unnecessary, in speaking with this freedom, to say that I distinguish between Mr. Spurgeon as a critic and theologian and Mr. Spurgeon as a man and a minister of Christ. In the former capacity I am compelled, without at all undervaluing your really great attainments, in a question turning upon interpretation to yield no more deference to your assertions than your authority deserves. In the latter capacity I freely give way to the promptings of admiration and affection, and pray for the long continuance of a life so dear to us all, and of an example so stimulating. We meet with many 'Broad' Churchmen whom no words can bind to anything in the Bible; and who, when shut up into a conclusion by fair criticism, will boldly say that 'words can settle nothing in Christian doctrine.' We meet also some who pretend to be orthodox, men who, when pressed, will try to escape with the equally wicked evasion that the New Testament is not written in Greek such as was understood in the first century of our era, but in some sacred dialect known only by the elect. There is no possibility of reasoning with such persons as these; but, as you are not one of either party, I commend these arguments to your candid attention with sincere regard.—Believe me, my dear Mr Spurgeon,

"Yours faithfully,

EDWARD WHITE."

In this pamphlet form the letters had a considerable sale, and one effect of their publication in the *Christian World* was to immediately increase the sale of that periodical by five thousand copies, as testified by the editor. Mr. White's three letters having appeared in the month of February, the three by Mr. Andrew Jukes followed in March, after which Dr. Angus set forth the arguments for the so-called "orthodox" doctrine, devoting his third letter to an exposition of the possible "alleviations" of its horror. In the meanwhile both Mr. Spurgeon and Mr. Rogers, then tutor in his college, had published articles in other periodicals against Mr. White, and therefore in the *Rainbow* for June he had an article in reply to them, and to Dr. Angus's three letters.

In this reply, having first pointed out that the term "annihilation" does not express his idea of death, and that in the chief works on his side the use of that term has been carefully eschewed, Mr. White continues: "It entangles the question with metaphysical arguments on the abolition of substance, and wholly conceals what we think the truth on the dissolution of the tripartite nature of man. Now it ought to be observed, that nearly the whole stress of the argument of Dr. Angus, and absolutely the whole of Mr. Rogers's, depends upon their being allowed to impute to us the idea, and the doctrine, of metaphysical annihilation. Once grant this word as our definition of death, and the issue of debate is brief and decisive; but Dr. Angus will not find, in any of my writings on this subject during the last twenty-five years, a single instance of the use of this term in teaching the doctrine of Life in Christ. He will not, I believe, find the word in the works of Professor Hudson, of Mr. Minton, of Mr. Constable, or Mr. Maude. I must, therefore, re-state the case, begging our opponents to abstain for the future from that imputation, which is *now* nothing better than an advantageous misconception, but will be henceforth a deliberate misrepresentation.

"Our idea of the death of a man is, that it is fundamentally the dissolution of his complex being, the destruction of that life which consists in the union of the parts. It is evident that this breaking up of humanity, or destruction of its life, may be effected in two different ways—either by the separation of the elements of man's being, or by the destruction of the very materials of his existence. There may be two 'deaths,' one in which the body is broken up, and the spirit which informed it is taken away from it, while both the dust and the spirit remain in being—and another in which not only the life and individuality of the complex man is dissolved and destroyed, but also the very elements of conscious being are reduced to nothing.<sup>1</sup> What we have taught is, that both these modes of death are spoken of in the Scripture, and are called respectively the first and the second death. To invent a special sense for the New Testament is to nullify the New Testament as a revelation. . . . When Luke wrote a Gospel for the Churches planted by Paul in Achaia, or Macedonia, or Asia Minor, or when Paul himself wrote letters to the Corinthians recently converted from heathenism, who can imagine, except a man who has some special theory to serve, that these compositions were set forth in words which were employed in senses previously unknown to the readers at Corinth, Philippi, Athens, or Thessalonika. Granted that, as foreigners, there would be some tincture of Hebrew idiom in the *combination* of their phrases, and granted that there would

<sup>1</sup> In using here an English phrase which is equivalent to the Latin word "annihilation," Mr. White is not inconsistent. His protest is against the use of that word as a synonym for death. Life and death are simple and correlative terms which have no synonyms. What is here admitted is that, in the case of the finally impenitent, the second death may result from the complete destruction of the sinner's very being. And it should always be understood, that such destruction will not be caused by an arbitrary or extraneous act, but will be the inevitable and constitutional result of the sinner's own moral alienation from God, the source of all life and being.

be some wholly new idioms introduced from the usage of Greek-speaking Jews of Palestine or Alexandria, under that spiritual discipline which the Greek language had undergone, in the countries surrounding Palestine, for three hundred years before the birth of Christ, still it is evident that their ordinary expressions were, from the very fact that they were used by the apostles, judged by them to be in *intelligible Greek*, so that none of the idioms were beyond the comprehension of an intelligent religious Greek-speaking man ; and equally evident that old words would not be used in new and strange senses (such as making death stand for endless life in misery, as it is said to be in Rom. v. 12-21) without full warning from such conscientious correspondents. . . .

“On our side there is no denial of the self-evident fact, that the term *life*, as used in Scripture to describe the present and future states of regenerate men, does include the associated ideas of holiness and happiness arising from a new relation to God, a spiritual resurrection resulting from redemption (Rom. vi. 4). No one ought to affirm that the bare idea of existence is all that the term includes. No one of any account does affirm it. Our position is only that this idea of existence is included in the meaning, is fundamental to it, the moral ideas associated with it having this physical conception of eternal conscious being (in opposition to death or destruction) as their basis.”

These letters and articles had brought the controversy to a stage in which it could no longer be entirely ignored by Christian teachers, nor treated, as the *Eclectic Review* had treated Mr. White's publication of *Life in Christ*, in 1846, as the outcome of youthful presumption and the desire for notoriety. His conduct during the quarter of a century that had elapsed since that time had clearly shown that the publication of that book had not been lightly undertaken, nor without the cost having been duly counted ; but that it had been rather the burden of the



Lord laid upon him, which he dared not shirk. This fact, and the manner in which his consequent temporary theological isolation had been borne, had won for him at last a respectful hearing. Moreover, his continued careful study, during all these years, both of the question itself, and of all the objections raised against the position he had taken, had given him a wider view of the whole subject, and deeper insight into its various relations, so that he could now recognize the crudity of his earlier work. Accordingly, in the short preface to his pamphlet, he expressed the desire that he might be judged by the statements now made, rather than by those of the book issued so long ago; although it should be stated that the main argument, and the conclusion, remained the same. In that preface he also explained that these letters did not profess to be a complete treatise, but only a general introduction to the subject, for a thorough examination of which other books should be consulted, and a careful and systematic study of the Bible would be needed.

Notwithstanding Mr. White's emphatic repudiation of the use of the term "annihilation" to represent his idea of "death," his opponents persisted in using it, and still persist, in spite of all that has been done to make his position clear. Mr. Baldwin Brown, not a very long time after these articles appeared, and again in 1877, gave lectures on what he called "The Miserable Doctrine of Annihilation," and the lectures were published under that title in the *Christian World*. The same misrepresentation is still current, and is set forth by some who ought to know better. For example, the following statement appeared in the *British Weekly* of February 14, 1901, over the name "R. J. Campbell": "The 'conditional immortality' view held by many at the present day, championed by the late Dr. Dale and favoured by Mr. Gladstone, is that the *life after death* is only for those who are in Christ, and that for the rest of mankind *death is annihilation*."

Neither the late Dr. Dale, nor Edward White, ever championed, nor did Mr. Gladstone<sup>1</sup> favour any such doctrine as that. They were always as firm believers as Mr. Campbell in a life after death for all men, and in a judgement to come; and we have seen how emphatically Mr. White denies that he has taught, or even thought, that death is equivalent to annihilation. There are indeed some believers in "Conditional Immortality" who think that between death and resurrection there is no conscious existence, but even these would repudiate Mr. Campbell's description as a misrepresentation of their belief; and Dr. Dale agreed with Mr. White in strenuously opposing that idea. In a letter printed in the *Christian World* of March 10, 1881, Mr. White wrote: "None believe more strongly than Mr. Dale, Mr. Minton, and myself, in the survival of all souls till the day of judgement, according to the Scriptures, when God will make it clear to all beings *why* each condemned person perishes for ever." But all these agree in the belief that except in Christ there is no endless life for man.

The course of the discussion that followed the publication of his letters led Mr. White to the conviction that the time was near when he might usefully prepare a treatise more complete than any hitherto published on this most important subject. His own book, issued so many years previously, he regarded as tentative and inadequate; and it was out of print. Towards the end of 1873 he resolved to re-write his book *Life in Christ* and he began to prepare the materials; but it was nearly a year before he could see his way to a satisfactory plan. At last it came to him as a sudden inspiration, and the writing then proceeded rapidly. According to a memorandum made by him on returning the last proof-sheet to the printers,

<sup>1</sup> See his *Studies Subsidiary to the Works of Bishop Butler* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1896). Particularly his *Summary of Theses on a Future Life*, pp. 260-267.

on September 25, 1875, "It was begun in October 1874 to be written, and ended in February 1875; writing and printing ended in the year." On October 11th he received the first complete copy of the new book with the old title, *Life in Christ*, of which the title is certainly more generally known than the contents. Only those who take the trouble to read it carefully throughout can perceive the great cumulative force of the series of arguments embodied in it. As Mr. White once wrote:—

"The effect of holding up the truth of Immortality in Christ amidst the revelations of Scripture, is like the lighting up of a vast stalagmite cavern by a great torch at its centre. The relations of its parts are seen, its splendours appear, its dark defiles are illuminated with a lustre never seen before."

Of this book there was a reprint in the following year; and in 1878 a third and cheaper edition was prepared, carefully revised, and with added notes, account having been taken of the chief criticisms that had appeared. Of this edition ten thousand copies were printed, and eventually all were issued.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is an error in the book, into which Mr. White was led by taking a quotation at second hand. At page 272 of the 1875 edition, at page 251 of the 3rd edition, 1878, the poet Cowper is represented, on the authority of Ste. Beuve, as having written: "God is always formidable to me, except when I see him disarmed of his sting, by having sheathed it in the body of Jesus Christ." The error is in the first and most important word in the sentence, which instead of "God" should be "Death," as Cowper wrote it in a letter to his friend, Joseph Hill, dated January 21, 1769, published in his *Life* by Thomas Taylor, 1st ed., 1833, p. 76; 4th ed., 1835, pp. 88-9.

Of course this correction completely alters the sense, and makes Mr. White's quotation of the sentence inappropriate. Some years ago (1889 or 1890) his attention was called to the error by Rev. Eric A. Lawrence, of Halifax, to whom he at once wrote as follows:—

"Many thanks for your obliging note on Ste. Beuve's mistake. As a lover of Cowper I am delighted to find that his words have been shockingly perverted by the Frenchman. I will take care to correct my error in any future edition of *Life in Christ*. The third edition of ten thousand is nearly exhausted, so that perhaps there will be an opportunity of correction in my lifetime.

"I quite forget whence I had the quotation from Ste. Beuve. I have a number of his *Causeries*, but cannot fix the original of this shocking sentence. If I have a suitable opportunity in any public writing, I will, before any new edition, remember to correct this frightful French misrepresentation. I thought Ste. Beuve was at least trustworthy."

As there has not been any further edition of *Life in Christ*, it has not hitherto been possible to make the correction.

NOTE.—In the Appendix B will be found a concise analysis of the book with a statement showing the relation of the doctrine therein set forth with the theological thought and needs of the present time. This has been kindly supplied by Rev. W. D. McLaren, M.A., whom Mr. White on several occasions indicated as the one among the younger theologians who had most thoroughly grasped the doctrine, and the whole series of arguments supporting it, and as being the most competent, therefore, to explain and restate his position to the men of the new generation that has sprung up since his book was published.

Appendix C contains some information respecting the influence of Mr. White and his book on the Continent, and in other parts of the world.



## CHAPTER VIII

### RECREATIVE TRAVEL

**M**R. WHITE travelled in Europe a good deal, in his later years as well as in his earlier years of strain and struggle. This he considered a good investment of both time and money. He said that money spent in travelling is not "soon gone," because it "lays up a permanent stock of pleasant recollections, and is invested in pictures which will never grow old." As he wrote, so long ago as 1841, "The more a man has travelled, the better he will understand every country that he sees, or sees again. So with books : the more a man reads, the better qualified he is to read again the works which first instructed or delighted him." Indeed, it is only by travelling that capacity for appreciating descriptions, when heard or read, is developed ; as Mr. White once wrote : "Description is powerless to convey impressions of scenery, except to those who have already seen something." He was one of those who make good use of their eyes in travelling. As he used to say, "The eye looks, but the mind sees ;" and he not only looked but saw.

At Bonn, in 1872, his meditation on contemplating the prospect over and beyond the Rhine, took shape thus :—

"The Power which works in atoms to produce living organisms, embodying patterns, works also in scenery to produce pictures, landscapes. But atmosphere is just what cannot be imitated or fully remembered.

"The Rhine descends from heaven as rain and snow upon the Alps, and gathers force and body as it flows from the Neckar, the Moselle, the Sarre, the Main, and the Meuse ; and thus it has flowed for ten thousand years unchanged, for mountains guard its course. Yet how changed the scenes which have been reflected upon its waters age after age : the primeval forest, ancient Germany, Roman dominions, the Frankish and Gothic Germany, the Papal Germany, the Germany of the Reform, the Modern Germany. Every living thing on the banks of this eternal river dies, every flower fades, every tree decays, but the grand Divine Idea and Landscape remains. This river has given printing and poetry to the world. . . .

"All things on the Rhine prove a mitigation of old ferocities. The amphitheatre at Trèves was for the pleasure of seeing men and beasts fight to the death—in ruins. The castles on every hill are the monuments of an age of incessant war between small sovereignties ; the river has run with blood at various times in its history. The towns are now unwallled. One vast empire protects all. Liberty of thought, speech, religion, prevails everywhere. *Ehrenbreitstein* its symbol (100,000 men).

"But life is not nobler than it was. It has turned from tragedy to comedy, except great State passions lift it up and great religious emotions absorb it and glorify it."

On revisiting Bonn the following year he wrote : "Long time a wanderer in foreign parts, nothing that I have seen comes from nature to the heart like a true English landscape." And indeed it was a great pleasure to him, besides paying a due tribute of admiration to the grander scenery of our own islands, occasionally to visit out-of-the-way parts of England, halting in small towns or villages, and taking long walks or drives round about. In this fashion he made acquaintance with some of the many little-known old country-houses with interesting associations ; here and there also with country ministers who, as he notes, do

good and noble work without obtaining much recognition, beyond their own very limited circle of influence. Now and again he would surprise the natives by telling them of some interesting or historic event that had occurred in their region, but of which they had never heard ; as, for instance, at Ebbes Fleet, near Minster, in Kent, where it is said that the monk Augustine, on his arrival from Rome, was met by the king, Ethelbert.

Of all Mr. White's visits to the Continent, the longest, the most important, and the most interesting, was in the early part of 1875, when he was abroad a little more than two months, and spent most of that time in Italy, about twenty-eight days of it in Rome. This journey not only gave him great pleasure but also helped him in his later work.

On his first visit to Paris, in 1854, he had remarked, that it made him feel "the immense difference between hearing and seeing." "I have been reading of Paris," he wrote, "all my life, but it was all as fresh to me as if completely unknown." If that was so in relation to Paris, how much more must it have been so when Rome was to be seen, the city of the Cæsars, of the Christian martyrs, of the Popedom!

The visit to Rome was the main purpose of this journey, and although it involved so long an absence, it was undertaken with the enthusiastic consent and support of the Church at Hawley Road. Mr. White's preparations for it included a number of books, as he "was resolved to read some of the right books on the right spots," and these, "like spectacles, would help him to see." He also took other aids to vision in the shape of spectacles and opera-glasses, on account of his near-sightedness.

Starting from London on February 8th, with Mrs. White, they travelled, *viâ* Dover and Calais, to Paris, Dijon, Turin, Genoa, Pisa (where Sunday was spent), then Siena and Rome, arriving there on February 17th, in the dark evening. On this last stage of the journey they had an

American Captain for fellow-traveller, one of those typical American tourists who rush at breakneck speed through Europe, so as to be able to say they have been to this place and that, but failing to gain any real knowledge or understanding of any. As a young lady "o' that ilk" once remarked, on being urged to stay in a town of considerable interest at least long enough to go through it: "Oh! I shall put down the name in my note-book, and trust to my imagination for the rest!" So this American, in one month after landing at Cork, had been to Dublin, Liverpool, London, Paris, Berlin, St. Petersburg, Moscow, Vienna, Trieste, Venice, Milan, and Turin; and now he was on his way to Rome and Naples, only one day to be given to the latter. He was to be in America again by the middle of March. That was not Mr. White's idea of travel.

During his stay in Rome the weather was only occasionally propitious, but, in spite of the rain, the time was well occupied from February 17th to March 9th, and from March 19th to March 26th, the interval between March 9th and 19th having been spent in Naples and the neighbourhood chiefly in company with Dr. and Mrs. Underhill. The following portion of a letter to Mr. W. D. Knight, one of his deacons, and a most intimate friend, recounts some of his experiences:—

" . . . At last the sun begins to shine. We have had dreadful weather for three weeks, rain, rain, cold wind, &c., no better than England. But we have not been idle. We have been active enough to wake up the dead inhabitants of all the churches and tombs. We have done miles of galleries, and seen a succession of Holy Families and St. Sebastians, enough to last a lifetime. I am tired of the Holy Family. Indeed, Rome is famous for sculpture rather than painting. My chief interest lies in antiquities. Yesterday we did the Forum and the Coliseum more thoroughly than before, and certainly that Coliseum must have been a wonderful sight when eighty thousand human animals



were crowded together to see the wild four-legged beasts tear each other to pieces, all hurraing at the top of their voices. I understand better why in prophecy the Roman Empire is called a Beast. Also why this old Church is called the Harlot of Babylon, for she dresses in shockingly bad taste. Yesterday I had a talk with Gavazzi, who calls me 'Red White.' Also the night before with Monsignor Nardi, the Pope's private secretary, to whom the Dean of Westminster gave me a letter. Only think, the private secretary of Antichrist! And he came in his hat and buckles and best clothes when I was in bed, so he had to wait in the passage while I dressed again to receive him. And he offered to introduce me to the Pope, which I declined with thanks, and is going to give me tickets to see behind the North Wind if I like it. I shall call on him tomorrow and shall try to evangelize him. He is going to be made a Cardinal, and a very pleasant one he will make. He wanted to know what sort of religion ours was, and whether there were any other congregations like ours! So I shall teach the Pope's secretary all about Congregationalism, and give him a tract, very likely! He seems immensely amused at Stanley's having sent him a ferocious bigot and puritan, a live English Dissenter. He wanted to know how much Stanley gets per annum, and whether the Establishment was coming down just yet, on all which questions I was able to give him information.

"I shall tell all about Wall in my sermon-letter. He seems to me to be the truest man in Rome, and his work genuine and simple. I like him immensely, and his wife is as good as he. I gave him the 333 francs you collected, being (as I pointed out to him) just half 666, the number of the beast. He will write a letter to our Church. . . ."

The last paragraph relates to the Mission carried on in Rome since 1870, when the city was first open to evangelistic operations, by Rev. James Wall and his family, now in connection with the Baptist Missionary Society.

Mr. White was present at the services on the opening of their place of Christian worship, the "Sala Cristiana" in the Piazza in Lucina, on Sunday and Monday, March 21 and 22, 1875, and spoke at the Monday evening meeting on the use of infidelity in destroying faith in the mythology of Romanism. He wrote a letter which was read at the Sunday evening service at Hawley Road on March 14th, in which he fulfilled the promise to tell his impressions of Mr. Wall's work, a work which he appreciated very highly.

A second letter to the Church was sent from Rome, and read at the week-night meeting on April 1st, extracts from which may here be introduced :—

"During the past week, on our return from Naples, I had the opportunity of being present at a meeting of the 'Free Christian Church' of Italy in the schoolrooms of Signor Gavazzi, where Mr. McDougall of Florence was also present, perhaps the most distinguished evangelical labourer in Italy. This 'Free Christian Church' must not be confounded with Mr. Wall's Mission, of which I gave some account in my former letter. It is strictly a native Italian movement of which Gavazzi and McDougall are the leading spirits. The latter has been so long in Italy, nearly twenty years, that the Italians reckon him to be one of themselves and accept his guidance without the reluctance which they feel to that of most foreigners. He is therefore on the Governing Committee of the Free Church. This Free Church partly resembles our English Congregationalism and partly Scottish Presbyterianism. It resembles Congregationalism inasmuch as it is based on spiritual discipleship and definite Church membership. Its basis of belief is very simple, not extending to such questions as baptism, so that each one seems left on those matters to follow his judgement. This Free Church, however, has an organic unity, with an Assembly possessing rather more of a legislative quality than our Congregational or Baptist Unions. And the

Churches meet by deputy twice a year, in the Italian cities in succession. Of these, Milan takes the lead in numbers and influence. They have a Church there of six hundred members. These are very earnest evangelists. They have sent out agencies all over Italy, and interest themselves in Christian education everywhere. They have a Church also at Florence, and a settled pastor—not Mr. McDougall, for he is unattached, an agent of the Bible Society, and a member of the Free Church of Scotland. But you see the influence of this useful servant of God everywhere. He is the chief agent in collecting the large funds in England and America which are needed to supplement Italian contributions. The Italians have scarcely learned yet the lesson of Christian giving as we understand it in England. Hence foreign aid is required to help in maintaining the ministry and fabrics for these forty Churches. Our Congregational Continental Society gives £450 per annum, the Scottish Free Church gives 25,000 francs annually.

“This Free Church movement alone represents the work of hundreds of devoted evangelists in many parts of Italy, all protected by the law, all able to speak Italian to their fellow-countrymen, all knowing the best way of approaching them, and I may say all praying earnestly for that baptism of the Holy Spirit without which Paul may plant and Apollos water in vain.

“Now a word as to the state of mind of the Italian people. They differ very much in the different provinces. Down in Naples, where we were last week, they seem to be an animalized, sensual race, bearing the marks of long neglect by their rulers and ages of oppression. The people look poor, and dirty beyond belief. One would gladly see the whole million people who inhabit the shore of the Bay of Naples driven into the water of the Bay and compelled to wash themselves. Their religion seems to consist of downright idolatry, with no attempt to spiritualize it what-

soever. But in Rome and in the north the people are very different. They have more capacity and more education and culture.

"It is these northern populations who have made the Italian Revolution. That Revolution is a much greater work than is commonly understood. The Government of the King of Italy, under Signor Minghetti, is immensely strong, and it is using its strength thoroughly to break down the priestcraft which has oppressed Italy for ages.

"But the middle classes are thoroughly saturated with infidel French literature. The Pope's Chamberlain, Monsignor Nardi, told me that they read greedily all the wicked French trash they can lay hold of. Thus, in evangelizing this people, while there is some advantage in finding them not so mad upon their old idols, there is also a great disadvantage in finding them thoroughly infidel, and opposed to all religion.

"They care much more for politics than for Christianity. Garibaldi is the idol of the multitude; a noble old patriot in all secular things, but unhappily an infidel—that is, a Deist and firm disbeliever in the authority of the New Testament. The day before yesterday was St. Joseph's Day (the husband of Mary). The Roman people kept it as the festa of another St. Joseph, *i.e.*, Joseph Garibaldi. It is a sad fact that the enormous, and in most respects wholesome, influence of Garibaldi is *not* exerted to promote Scriptural religion, but only the Deism which is the reaction from superstition.

"But it has generally been found that a reaction into scepticism is a necessary preliminary to the conversion of populations who have been drenched with superstition. It was so in respect to the population of the pagan Roman Empire at the coming of Christ. The sceptical philosophies were useful in destroying the popular faith in the old heathen gods and goddesses. Then came apostolic Christianity and filled up the void which had been made. So



it will be here. The curse of Romanism is that it so thoroughly fills the mind with a *mythology* that you can scarcely introduce Scriptural Christianity into it until a thorough clearance has been made of all the old notions and beliefs. The very idea of God has to be created in the mind over again. I do not therefore look upon the prevailing scepticism quite so hopelessly as some of my friends. Things are going on in the right direction, and God is working wonderfully, raising up suitable agencies to make known His truth. The greatest evil of the popular religion is that it puts God so far away and represents the saints, with Mary at their head, as the real persons to be propitiated. It is nothing but affectionate gospel-preaching which can remedy this evil, bringing us near to God and showing the way into the holiest made manifest by the blood of Jesus.

“But the Gospel, like everything else, gains force by going. Every day sees the growth of the evangelical movement, and if the various believers in Christ are not openly one, yet the glory of the truth seems to shine through even the faults of men, and Italy is certain to hear before long of a Gospel with one Priest only, and one effectual Redeemer.

“The Church of Rome, however, has not lost its power over large numbers of the people. It can be said only that the large majority of men support the Government, and the Revolution, and free thought. It would be a mistake to suppose that there are no devotees. On the contrary, they are numerous and bigoted, and if they had the chance would, I believe, enjoy the opportunity of another St. Bartholomew to crush the Revolution. The machinery of the Church, its fabrics everywhere in Italy, are grand beyond all description. After years of reading, I feel astonished at the splendour and vastness of these structures. And great buildings are great powers everywhere. The priests are stripped of much of their wealth, but they

do not acknowledge themselves beaten, and they persevere in their courses with a zeal worthy of a better cause. One thing alone is strong enough to overpower the influence of these sublime structures and services, and that is the true Gospel—a world of new ideas. And as the Gospel once emptied the Italian temples of heathenism, so it is equal to emptying the temples of Antichrist.

“Acquaintance with the struggle of principles here going forward would be very wholesome for us at home. We ought to sympathize warmly with the representatives of the truth. On my return I hope to be able to make some of them better known to you. Meantime let these few hints serve to awaken on Thursday evening some earnest prayers for Italy, and specially for the work of God in the newly-formed Churches of the Gospel.”

During the quarter of a century that has elapsed since the foregoing letter was written all the men whose names appear in the letter have disappeared from this mortal scene: Pope Pio Nono, Garibaldi, Victor Emmanuel, Minghetti, Nardi, Gavazzi, McDougall, and last of all Mr. Wall, after more than thirty years of evangelizing work in Rome, and nearly forty in Italy. This long period has brought great changes in Italy, and a large extension of the evangelistic labours of Christians there; but the hopes expressed by Mr. White have been as yet only partially realized, and the evangelization of the Italians will be a slow process.

Extracts from a letter written to Mr. Knight at a later date may fitly be introduced here, as they relate to the same visit to Rome.

“Every reference in your letter brings before me a vivid image of the object referred to, and renews faintly the pleasure of the original observations, which we owed in part to your lifelong kindness, as you may perhaps remember. But I pat my own back retrospectively for taking every measure possible at the time to perpetuate the impressions by writing them down the same day, so

that ever since these brief records recall the objects which I wish to think of, and with considerable success, the whole resulting in a lifelong pleasure. I well remember every piece of the visits you describe, and only wish many other recollections of my life were as vividly recoverable as these. But the whole concern is a ruin and a clerical rook's nest compared with the aspect of things in the respectable days of those grand old pagans who built the city and were not yet corrupted by absurd popies and melodramatic religiosities. I quite agree with you about St. Paolo, and much prefer it to St. Peter. I quite believe the tradition of the Tre Fontane, so far as to its being the place of St. Paul's execution; there being no [more] reason why an erroneous tradition should be handed down respecting such an event than one respecting the martyrs at Smithfield. Only I wish St. Paul could have the chance of announcing a course of sermons to be delivered there, in continuation of the Epistle to the Romans and the Acts of the Apostles, Luke giving out the hymns and reading the lessons. . . . Ever since I saw Rome, history has been a new pleasure to me, yielding images so much more distinct. And the thought often occurs, 'Oh that I had looked more distinctly for this and that!' I hope you went to St. Gregory's Monastery, whence came the English Mission."

As illustrating Mr. White's love for scenery and appreciation of its beauties in detail, the following letter may prove interesting. It was written to Mrs. Cannings, a lady with whom he corresponded very freely during many years, when on a visit to Switzerland endeavouring to recuperate after a serious break-down in his own and in his wife's health:—

" AEGISCHHORN, *July 5, 1885.*

" . . . We came hither from Glion at the east end of the Lake of Geneva, where probably Adam and Eve were created and put in Paradise. Oh! the colours of that lake

and its mountains, day and night! If looking at colours would mend anybody, we should be both well. Thence we steered up the Rhone valley, and finally ascended to heaven on two obstinate horses—not of fire, but of lead—lashed by attendant porters—not angels. We arrived out of great heat to damp cold and a raging thunderstorm. But the next day was better, and we immediately began to climb the mountains, or what remains of them between this and the stars. The rest of the time is spent in eating goat and hill-mutton and stringy beef. To-day, Sunday 5th, opened gloriously. Heaven came down on earth. I rose early and went forth alone along the western pathway on the mountain-side, until after turning two or three headlands the Zermatt valley came into distant view from this enormous height. And it was a sight worth even that ascent to see. There was the Weisshorn, rising up against the blue sky, with its pyramidal apex, the whole vast mountain clothed in purest white from top to bottom, and extending its wings of gold and silver far on each side. On one side of him the Matterhorn rising to nearly equal height with its quaint and dangerous looking top, whence fell Hadow and the rest of the climbers. Then again the Mischabel and Monte Rosa, and on the other side in pale distance Mont Blanc. Often as I have seen these mountains, I never saw them in this fashion. The morning sun was brilliant, the air pellucid, and all the green middle distance shining in verdure and repose. No wonder God called the prophets up mountains to die, for this 'great vision' was fit to think of when the shadows will deepen at the last. Man and the great mountains show that there are hopes beyond. Fancy a pig transported at the view of the Weisshorn, or a cat overpowered before breakfast at the spectre of the Matterhorn against the blue! And we shall 'see greater things than these.' . . . "



## CHAPTER IX

### LOCAL AND GENERAL ACTIVITIES

1870-1875; AGE 50-56

ALTHOUGH the controversy on "Life in Christ" has been allowed to take precedence in this narration, it was only one among many subjects which engaged Mr. White's time and attention during these years. Whatever else demanded his sympathy and co-operation, the claims of his pastorate always held the first place in his thought, and in the apportionment of his time. That pastoral work cannot, however, bulk largely in a biography which is intended for the general public. His sermons were always carefully prepared, and to a great extent written, although his use of the MS. in the pulpit was very free, and sometimes it was discarded altogether. What he felt with regard to the sermon may be gathered from a note written in 1870: "There is no work on earth so difficult as to say something in half an hour which shall interest, instruct, and spiritually edify a miscellaneous company of men, women, and children." His estimate of the importance of visiting the sick appears in a note, written at a later date, but embodying views long held and acted on: "It is one half of a good pastor's duty to visit the sick, and the other half to see that those who are not sick do the same thing. Nothing can be more injurious than for a pastor to absorb all sick-visiting. It is as bad

as his absorbing all praying, all giving, all teaching of the truth." Accordingly, there was a good deal of visitation carried on, not only by the deacons, but also by other members, especially by the ladies of the Church. Nor was this confined to the sick; it was extended largely to the poorer inhabitants of the neighbourhood, to whom timely succour was often carried when they were in distress.

But while keeping a watchful eye upon all such activities, and aiding with his counsel and personal co-operation, Mr. White devoted much time and energy to objects outside his own Church, and some of these must now be mentioned.

In 1870 Mr. Forster's Bill to provide for Elementary Education became law, after a good deal of controversy as to the requirement, or permission, of religious teaching in schools that were to be largely maintained out of public rates. Many of the Nonconformists were strenuously opposed to all such teaching as part of the school programme, and by teachers who might, or might not, be themselves religious; while others were equally opposed to the exclusion of the Bible, and of all reference to religion. By the "Act," when finally passed, the question was left to the decision of each Board to be elected under its provisions, so that there was room for variety in the practical treatment of this burning question. Mr. White took part in the discussion both while the Bill was before Parliament, and afterwards when the School Board for London was to be elected. He was strongly opposed to the exclusion of the Bible from the schools, and supported those candidates who were in favour of Bible reading, but without sectarian teaching of any sort. In this he diverged from his close friend, Dr. Dale, and the Birmingham Board, who were in favour of the rigid application of the principle that public money should not be used for teaching religion, which ought to be taught by the Churches. Some of the Hawley Road members agreed with that view, but

the majority were in sympathy with Mr. White, and the local candidates supported by him were returned. Similar results were attained in so many other districts of London, that their policy was adopted by the Board when it came to decide the question. This policy has been very generally followed by other School Boards, and even Birmingham has at last come round to it. It has worked fairly well now for thirty years, under the supervision of a succession of Government Administrations, and would continue to do so were it not for the efforts of Church of England partizans to get their special teaching introduced and subsidized.

In the same year, 1870, the Vatican Council under Pope Pío Nono was induced to decree the Infallibility of the Pope when speaking *ex-cathedrà*. This was done on July 13th, and on the very next day war was declared between France and Prussia. Mr. White followed the proceedings of the Council with keen interest, foreseeing some of the disastrous results which were sure to follow such a decree. He took an equally deep interest in the course of the Franco-Prussian war, which so soon became Franco-German, and he sought to derive from it useful lessons for himself and his congregation. In the early stages of that war he noted the fact, that even "Christians in every State are very likely to be persuaded to take national views of war: French Christians to think God is on the French side, Prussians to think Him on the German side, neutrals to think He is neutral. . . . The truth is, that God is on the side of disinterested justice and right, on the side of humanity, as distinct from France or Germany; on the side of retributive justice for all sinners. And that is the side on which Christians must range themselves." He endeavoured to trace the secondary causes which led to the collapse of the French army and Empire, and the superiority of the German—causes which on both sides were moral, and therefore such as are fraught with instruction for all peoples and all times.

The establishment of the London Congregational Union was, to a large extent, brought about by Mr. White's influence at this time. In the spring of 1871 he read a paper at the meeting of the Congregational Union of England and Wales on "Comprehension." On November 28th was held a private meeting at the house of the Rev. J. C. Harrison, to consider the proposal to form a local Union for London. The preliminary work of communicating with the Churches, explaining the project, and obtaining their adhesion, occupied a considerable time, so that it was not until June 17, 1873, that the first Conference of this Union was held at Finsbury Chapel, where there was a large assembly of ministers and delegates, the Rev. J. C. Harrison presiding. At this meeting Mr. White read a paper "On some of the Undeveloped Forces of London Congregationalism." In this paper he referred to the chief purpose for which the Union had been formed, which was to bring the Churches into touch with each other, and so promote mutual helpfulness. Conferences such as this would be more manageable and afford more scope for real discussion of local needs than the larger meetings of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. With such great variety in the circumstances, and the capacities, of the many Churches in the metropolis, it would be a distinct gain if, by these meetings for conference, all could be informed of the condition of each. Their varied endowments, mental and spiritual, ought not to be considered the private property of the holders, but as belonging to all. He continued: "It is generally confessed that we have been too much isolated from each other in our Independency. The overmastering passion for local administration, which is our besetting virtue and traditionary characteristic, has reached its fullest development in London and is a legacy from evil days long passed away. . . . Notwithstanding the excuses for isolation, isolation is a great practical evil, for it tends to



narrow and stereotype our views, thereby to diminish our force, to depress our spirit, and greatly to aggravate our selfishness. . . . It is in its spiritual life that all the real power of Independency consists. We are surrounded by Church systems in Europe which openly welcome to their membership miscellaneous populations and seek to win them by the attractions of sense and superstition. With these we can hold no rivalry. We build everything on the foundation of the regenerate life. . . . If we have not that, our Churches become, decorate them as you may, the dullest of dead organisms in Christendom. With that, we can appropriate and sanctify into a divine use all the arts and even all the sciences, if we had them ; but we can also do without them and thrive on God alone . . . Union is strength, not less in spiritual affairs than in temporal, and the benefits of union we may have without sacrificing one atom of our local independency. A general union of London Churches will strengthen all district unions, and that ought to be our ultimate object. There is distinctly a blessing on every attempt at manifesting in a spiritual way the unity of the body of Christ. . . . Heaven seldom confers all its gifts upon one man or one community, not even when the man is the many-gifted minister of an Independent Church and the Church one of the straitest of the Congregational persuasion. There is much that we might learn in spiritual affairs from each other, if we had the chance. . . . We profess to build on Holy Scripture alone, to take not only our teaching but our principles of Church constitution from the writings of the evangelists and apostles. The opposition to this plan of religious thought and action is very fierce and contemptuous, as it has always been, but ours is a position of immense strength and utility in the general battle of ideas at the present time. Singly we may not be very formidable upholders of this position, but united in closer ranks and yielding each other more support we shall make the

influence of this principle felt throughout English Christendom. . . . If all of us were doing even half of what God has given us power to do, the whole city would be moved, as when Jesus rode in triumph into Jerusalem. Let us once look upon the world with eyes that have looked first within the veil, and realize that we are in the midst of a scene where men are earning death eternal in the error of their lives, and some are ending their course every hour, and then there will be an onset and a shout of battle and a rush in among the evil doers, and a cry of 'Turn from these vanities!' which might almost cause the sun and moon to stand still for heaven to enjoy the spectacle of such a victory."

Mr. White continued to take a lively interest in this London Congregational Union, and an active part in its management until his retirement from the pastorate. In 1883 he was its chairman. At the annual meeting on March 9th that year he delivered an address on "Church Life in London," wherein he reverted to the same theme; this time, however, applying the true principles of Independency to the conduct and needs of the separate Churches, instead of to their joint action as a Union. He began by saying that he should speak: first, of the normal idea of genuine Independency; second, of its counterfeits; and third, of the necessity of stirring each other up to a more vigorous internal life. A few extracts may be given: "In the present state of English society one object alone makes it worth while to incur the costs of Nonconformity, and that is the hope of establishing Churches more apostolic in doctrine, more catholic in temper, more friendly to the spiritual, intellectual, and practical training of Christians than the Church established by law. If this end can be attained, all sacrifices are worth making to realize it. . . . It is only by great ideas and by lofty aims that the higher enthusiasms of men can be kindled. . . . The whole heart of a Christian,

in its noblest exercise of faith and self-sacrifice, can go forth only to that which bears marks of being a living branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church. Plenty of people can be persuaded on all sides to work for ecclesiastical combinations which have in them more of the human than the divine; content with the old-established ways of going on in thinking, worshipping, sermon-hearing, giving, and internally going to sleep. . . . But then this, whatever else it may be, is not what is designed by a Christian Church, which when genuine is as much a supernatural work of God as the Church of Corinth or Ephesus, and it is a shame for such assemblies, if they exist, to call themselves Independent Churches. . . . The one thing that makes it worth while to be Independents is that we may have a real Church life, a Church life better than the parochial one; and this is not to be attained without very serious exertions, much consideration, and most earnest prayer. . . . The original formative idea of Independency meant just this: Christ's Catholic Church, comprehending all of all ranks who believe in Him and keep His commandments; the weak as well as the strong; but putting away openly wicked persons by a vigorous discipline; one Church indivisible in every neighbourhood and owning no subjection to Synod, or Prelate, or Archbishop, to none but Christ the Lord speaking through His apostles. To restore this idea was the object of the early Independents, in opposition to forms more or less degenerate. But the almost universal prevalence of organized priesthoods and connexional Church systems, established and unestablished, or of Churches set up for the special defence of some one idea, have defeated the local Catholic development which would unite us in one body. Our so-called Independents have never yet succeeded in persuading all the earnest Christians in one parish, or even in one village, to throw their knowledge, culture, faith, wealth, activity into one common stock

for mutual help in edification and worship, and for home and foreign missions. . . . But even under present circumstances it is possible for these limited societies to exhibit the working of sound principles. . . . I wish that we could persuade all our pastors, deacons, and the better educated members of the Churches jointly to resolve, with God's help, on the restoration of a more vigorous Church life in London, beginning with the Church meetings. The details of frequency and mode of procedure I must of course pass over, having no general recipe for improvement; but I submit to you that the meeting of a considerable company of men and women, all in some degree earnest as to religion, and apart from the presence of persons who do not care enough for Christ even distinctly to confess Him before men, is always a great power and a power of a very peculiar description. If there is any species of assembly in which we may expect signs of God's presence and help, it is here. A congregation of seatholders, irrespective of faith and obedience, is not a Church of Christ at all. . . . Why are we so much afraid of rendering our Church-meetings more various, more interesting, more powerful, by at least occasional conference on divine truth, on the spiritual interests both of the Church and its neighbourhood? Why can we not persuade every member of the Church to consecrate resolutely that evening—it need not be of too frequent occurrence—to the development of the latent energies of the community? If a man will not sacrifice now and then a late dinner, a concert, a party, his fireside ease, or even his gains, to such an object, he is at all events not as earnest in his religion as many atheists are in attending their consistories. . . . The life of Independency, next to the spirit of prayer, is free and honest thought, free and honest speech, free and honest action; and I cannot understand why in religion these should be feared more than in any other departments of modern activity. . . . When real Church life is fully restored and



its true importance is attached to the society of confessed believers, as distinct from its exterior followers, then this distinction [between *proclaiming* the Gospel to people who are still outside, and *teaching* truth in its details to Church members] will recur in all its force. 'There will be the preaching or heralding of the Gospel to 'them that are without,' . . . and there will be sometimes more advanced teaching for the Church 'publicly and from house to house.' And this last teaching of smaller selected companies in houses is just as important as teaching the whole company of the faithful."

Mr. White went on to explain how this distinction between preaching and teaching throws light on more than one practical question. He mentioned three: (1) Women's ministrations. Paul prohibits a woman to teach in the Church, but no similar embargo is laid upon the services of women in prophesying, or evangelizing, outside. (2) The proper work of the unofficial members of the community. "A teacher ought to know a little more of the Word of God than his hearer, and ought to be 'first proved' in this before we set him in the chair of the Church doctor, since there the truth ought to be taught as a living whole, and not as a compilation of negative controversies. . . . But there are frequently men in our London Churches, men of education, writers, professional men, men of social position, who 'ought to be teachers,' at least sometimes, yet whose voice is never heard in the assembly on either Sundays or week-days, they being usually the very last who are willing to assume uncalled this public responsibility. . . . But the rule here, as everywhere, is: 'Let these also first be proved.' When such men can be persuaded to hold office as deacons in the Church it gives to the office a double influence and double sanctity." (3) The preaching or proclamation of the Gospel, teaching the elements of Christianity to outsiders, as to which the principle is "that every one who

understands the Gospel not only may, but must, in some way, in public or in private, habitually communicate it to others. And the only dangers to be guarded against are (1) lest men should mistake this power of preaching the Gospel for omniscience, or even for the power of teaching in the Church; and (2) lest any should undertake public evangelistic work without some previous instruction, and without a distinct examination and commission from the Church." The address ended with a stirring appeal for a more thorough evangelization of the millions in the vast metropolis.

This characteristic address has been introduced here, in anticipation of its chronological position, because it seems to complete the one mentioned just previously; and it gives an interesting view of Mr. White's attitude in relation to several important practical questions. Its introduction here is no anachronism, since at the period now under review the principles expounded in it were held and taught in his own ministry, and put into practice in his own Church and neighbourhood. The evangelization of the streets around the chapel was not neglected, the methods adopted being various. Early in 1874 Mr. White prepared a "Friendly Letter" to the inhabitants, showing that the Gospel message is one of Forgiveness of Sins, while amendment of life is to follow. This was printed, and got up as a neat little book, five thousand copies of which were put into envelopes, as many as possible were addressed, and they were distributed by members one Sunday morning in February, at all the houses in the immediate vicinity. Similar little books were circulated in like manner in subsequent years. On the first Sunday evening in 1875, Mr. White preached to a large audience in a Camden Town theatre, a series of such services having been arranged for.

On March 20, 1874, he accompanied Mr. Oncken of Hamburgh, and Mr. Wilkin of Kentish Town, to West-

minster, and introduced them to Dean Stanley, whose aid they sought in endeavouring to put an end to the persecution of the Baptists in Southern Russia, usually called "Stundists." The Dean promised to do what he could, by private conversation in high quarters, during the visit of the Russian Court in London. His opportunities for this were slight, but, whether in consequence of his representations or not, as a matter of fact the persecution became less violent soon afterwards. When Mr. Wilkin and his friends heard that a special messenger had been sent to the South of Russia on this business, and found that no further accounts of persecution reached them, they concluded that the Dean's efforts, combined with those of other friends both in England and America, had really produced the desired effect.

In 1871-2 Mr. White was visited by three persons who, on account of their reception of the doctrine of Life in Christ, had been "put out of fellowship" by the "Brethren" of Bethesda Church at Bristol, under the lead of the well-known George Müller and Henry Craik. The first of these outcasts was Mr. J. F. B. Tinling, B.A., who had done much successful evangelistic work, in India as well as in England, and was to have worked with the Bethesda Church in connection with the new building at Clifton. His call upon Mr. White was the beginning of a friendship that was unbroken except by death. The other two persons similarly treated by the "Brethren" were Miss Groves and Miss Craik, each of whom was nearly related to one or other of the leaders in that Church.

At the autumnal assembly of the Congregational Union, in October 1875, held in London, Mr. White seconded a resolution relating to a proposal, emanating from some of the most liberally minded of the Anglican clergy, for legalizing their officiating in Nonconformist places of worship.

His speech on that occasion gave rise to much comment

on both sides, and his words and attitude were so misconstrued by some that he felt it necessary to write a letter to the *Nonconformist* in order to set himself right. In his speech he had said, that in England there is, all round, a good deal of stolid sectarianism of thought, and a good deal of organized intolerance, which render it desirable to get an occasional infusion of thinking from men bred in other Churches, and under other systems. Isolation, such as that of the Congregational Churches, has its dangers as well as its advantages, so that it would be really a good work, if it were possible, to promote some interchange of ideas on Sundays. But he agreed with the sentiment of the resolution, that it would be useless to expect such blessedness as the free interchange of ministry from the Anglican clergy while things remained as they then were. The resolution indicated disestablishment as a necessary preliminary to any such free interchange as was desirable, and Mr. White expressed the hope that by that means it might be brought about, but asserted that the longer disestablishment was delayed, the less likely would be the realization of such a consummation. He said: "The spirit of a Church when disestablished depends a good deal on what it was when united with the civil power. . . . If it was a thoroughly Protestant Church, it is possible that its clergy will behave in a proper brotherly spirit when compelled to stand alone. If it was a Roman or a Romanizing Church its clergy will become the most intolerant, the most intriguing, and the most dangerous body of men in the whole Commonwealth. . . . If you wait until the Anglican clergy are still more thoroughly saturated with the 'sacerdotal spirit' of which the resolution speaks, not only will they, when set free from State control, not preach for you, but perhaps they will render it at least very uncomfortable for you in the villages and small towns to preach at all."

The quarter of a century that has elapsed since that time



has given to the last-quoted sentence a sharper point, and a fuller meaning. In his letter to the *Nonconformist*, after pointing out a misconception of Dean Stanley, who had referred to the speech in a sermon in Westminster Abbey, and mentioning the fault found with him by the denominational Press, Mr. White goes on to say : " As to my own speech, I had resolved, from the moment of undertaking to second the resolution, to show to the movers of the interchange scheme, and to all other Church of England men, that if we felt opposed to the project of special *legislation*, as likely to result in a one-sided reciprocity, this was not because we were disposed to a policy of intellectual or ecclesiastical isolation, or because we felt ourselves secure against the danger of insularity to which we and all Englishmen are liable. In carrying out this idea, in a speech of fifteen minutes, I presumed on the true and generous catholicity of the audience which I had the honour to address. I reckoned that, if not delivered with ill-nature, they would hear and support by their sympathy certain admissions as to our liability to such insularity, and of our need of frequent intellectual association with other Christians, even going so far as to affirm our advantage from the secular Press as a means of culture and an incentive to research, and inviting the assembly to say how they would like to be subjected to an exclusive diet of their own denominational organs. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ*. It had been on the tip of my tongue to add the question how Church of England folks would enjoy being shut up with nothing to read except the *Rock* and the *Record*, the *Guardian* and the *Church Times*. But I refrained from this, thinking that the object was sufficiently clear from the words which preceded, that we 'must allow that there is in England *all round* a good deal of stolid sectarianism of thought, and a good deal of organized intolerance, which render it desirable to get an occasional infusion of thinking from men bred in other Churches and under other systems.' The

audience took my words as they were intended, with perfect temper and benevolence. The denominational journals, however, failed of my expectations, and have not ceased since to belabour me with undeserved severity, thereby only confirming my position that a pabulum of that quality alone would not be good for men of any theological party whatsoever."

## CHAPTER X

### CONTROVERSIAL WORK

1876-1879; AGE 56-60

THE peculiar position which Mr. White had taken on the question of baptism has already been referred to. In the spring of 1876 this led to a passage of arms between himself and Dr. Landels, who was then President of the Baptist Union. At the closing session of the Congregational Union a paper was read by Dr. Parker on "Organized Congregationalism," and in the discussion that followed Mr. White spoke of the two denominations of Congregationalists existing in England, and deprecated all rivalry between them, with special reference to the address of Dr. Landels, then recently delivered from the chair of the Baptist Union. He claimed to be qualified to speak on this point, as being in a sense "amphibious" to both denominations; and urged that in villages and small towns, where there is one Church of the Congregational order, and not room for two, they should on each side abstain from setting up a second, which would inevitably be itself weak, and would weaken the other. He did not understand having a stronger conscience on baptism than on Christianity, Protestantism, and Free Churchmanship. He closed by saying: "If we would make the best of our Free Churchmanship, and represent its principles so as to win the adherence of the people of

England, we must on all sides learn to think a little more charitably and kindly of each other, and then it is probable we shall successfully organize Congregationalism."

For this speech he was taken to task by the denominational papers and by Dr. Landels, who repudiated responsibility for Mr. White's inferences from what he had said. Mr. White replied to his strictures in a long letter to the *English Independent*, wherein he explained that it was from hearing, not reading, Dr. Landels' address that he had received the impressions dealt with in his speech. He then proceeded to say: "After reading Dr. Landels' explanations in your columns, I am convinced that he did not intend to make any one of the three statements which I have 'directly or indirectly' represented as the substance of the offending paragraphs in his address; and therefore with many apologies for my simplicity, I submit frankly to his declaration that he did not contemplate the inferences deduced by me from what he said." He then reiterates his opinion that these inferences were, to a person not too intelligent, the natural, if undesigned, results of what had been said.

Dropping further reference to Dr. Landels, he then goes on to enlarge upon the topics to which allusion had been made, and in the closing paragraph puts his own position so clearly that it seems worth while to quote it in full: "In making these allusions, I refer especially to the imputation of small and corrupt motives which some Baptist newspapers are apt to make on persons who partly agree with them, yet who prefer ecclesiastical communion in Churches among whom they were born. I entirely concur with such writers in their estimate of the importance of a right doctrine on baptism, but there are at least a few worthy persons who think that that holy ordinance, one of the great sacraments of the Gospel, loses much of its sanctity, and even some of its meaning as the baptism of repentance *for the remission of sins*, by becoming the



watchword of a sect, by being taken under the patronage of a party, so as to be looked on almost as their private property ; who think further that the formation of a community on such a basis inevitably leads weaker minds to vulgarize the specialty and make a hobby of it ; and worse still, that such a procedure intensifies indefinitely pædobaptist obduracy of opinion and hinders, more than all others combined, the diffusion of this very doctrine which the party is supposed to uphold and defend. Whereas if you thoroughly sympathize with pædobaptists in the strong points of their position on infant baptism, namely, in their zeal for children in relation to Christ ; if you do justice to their honest intentions in the touching ceremony, to which especially holy *women* cling, and are able to show them tenderly that while children will lose nothing by the omission of an inoperative and seemingly uncommanded rite, the Churches which teach the monstrous error of baptismal regeneration in infancy will lose their chief moral support in losing the example of Nonconformist pædobaptism, something might eventually be done to extend widely the area of such beliefs. These at least are my own convictions, held, however, with due remembrance of the difficulty of the controversy. Dr. Landels will, I fear, speak of such an avowal as 'lecturing both bodies at once,' and as indicating a fearful degradation of moral character. But hard words break no bones, and I know many Baptists who are of a similar way of thinking, though repudiating with all their strength both that mischievous and unwarrantable name, and the denominationalism to which it leads. Meantime we shall all agree that there are no finer Congregationalists (that is apostolic Churchmen) and none who more deserve our reverence and affection than multitudes who glory, like Dr. Landels, in both."

At the autumnal meetings of the two Unions in the same year there were further incidental references to the subject,

and these induced Mr. White to write letters to the *Freeman* and the *Christian World*. An extract from the latter of these will complete the description of his position in relation to baptism. He writes: "For me the subject of baptism is involved in other questions relating to man's death by sin and immortality in Christ, and therefore I cannot discuss it simply on the old party basis. To a mind in this state it appears as reasonable to establish a sect based on the reformation of the doctrine of the Eucharist, as the symbol of the Bread of Life, and to call it the Lord's Supperist Denomination, with all the usual appliances, as base a sect solely on a reformed doctrine of baptism. . . . The whole truth on the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (the only baptism mentioned in the New Testament, though seldom referred to by even Baptist Nonconformists) seems to the undersigned to be divided between several ecclesiastical parties, and the desire to give the utmost prominence to the Christian culture of children, which underlies infant baptism, appears also a feeling deserving the warmest recognition as truly Christian."

In connection with the meetings of the Congregational Union, in that year, an instance occurred of Mr. White's faculty for good-humoured banter, which puts an end to painful discussion without leaving a sting. Several ministers, in a private committee-room, had been speaking with some bitterness of a public utterance of one of the brethren whose name happened to be Joseph. Mr. White relieved the tension and amused them all by remarking that "it was only Joseph making himself known to his brethren."

In July 1876 Mr. White took part in a conference of Anglican dignitaries and leading Nonconformists at Lambeth Palace on the subject of "Modern Unbelief." The general opinion seemed to be that this was not widely spread, but that the masses were held to faith more by

tradition and sentiment than by argument. Infidelity cannot be silenced ; it can talk on long after the process of argument has ceased.

In 1877 Mr. Henry Richard, M.P., was Chairman of the Congregational Union ; and, in his address at the spring meeting, he referred to the proper attitude of Christians towards war in such a way as to renew the controversy of 1860 on that subject with Mr. White, who not only spoke at the Union meeting, but also wrote several letters which were published in the *English Independent* and the *Christian World*, in vindication of his position ; which was, that the "Sermon on the Mount" is not the law of the *State*, but that the magistrate is, and ought to be, a terror to evil doers. This question Mr. White afterwards treated more fully, when in his turn he presided in 1886 over the meetings of the Union.

On various occasions Mr. White's speeches at the meetings of the Congregational Union have been followed by sharp criticism in the religious newspapers. This was particularly the case with a speech delivered at one of the meetings at Leicester in October 1877. That speech abounded with amusing touches, and was received with both laughter and applause, but the aim all through was serious and practical. The purpose in view was to vindicate the exclusion from the Union of those who do not admit the divinity of Christ as the Incarnation of the divine *Logos*. The subject, as announced, was, "The Flexibility of Independency," and he began with a joke on the manufacture of elastic, which he had been told was one of the staples of Leicester. He used the structure of the spinal column as an illustration of flexibility in conjunction with firmness and strength, and then, before dealing with the question in relation to Independency, proposed to study it in some other religious bodies.

Beginning with Rome, he said : "There is the standing example of the Popedom, with the poker of infallibility

down its throat, that throat red hot with centuries of cursing all attempts at independent thinking, the unchangeable, the unreformable, the stiff-necked Popedom, which will put off neither the 'old man' nor the old woman, but sticks to its 'old wives' fables' in the full blaze of the nineteenth century.

"Now let us come nearer home and take a kindly survey of the interior of the Anglican Institution. No one can say that there is any lack of flexibility there. If a young man in early life is visited with a desire to help to save the souls of his fellow-creatures, he can go into the open market and buy a living, and come out in one of three very different characters. He can come out in the full glow of the sacerdotal system, and hope some day to be the confessor of the younger women which are sisters, and the older women also, and grow into an old woman in the process. Or he can start in the line of the old-fashioned Evangelicalism; or he can select the more new-fangled system of the most advanced modern scepticism, in the shape of the extreme left of the Broad Church party; and, having thus bought his living, he can go into his parish and lay before the souls of the persons whom he has thus bought his view of things eternal. Now nobody can complain of any want of flexibility there. He may sign the Articles in any sense he pleases, and with an accommodation in the meaning of words which, if it were practised in business, would soon put an end to all English trade; but in matters relating to the other world, that is not a matter of such importance." Reference was then made to the Church Congress at Croydon, and the complete equanimity of its proceedings, and Mr. White went on: "Though many personal attachments among the clergy would prevent me from ever speaking of them as a body without great affection and respect, yet I cannot sincerely say that I believe their quietness at Croydon was in consequence of any real growth in their characters of the principle of



what we understand by toleration. It was because of something very different, for when there came a test of the growth of toleration in their minds, when the question of the burial of dead Dissenters came on, out flared the old spirit from all the three parties with uncompromising force, and it was manifest that our brethren had not made any real progress in spiritual equanimity. Last week I happened to be walking through London with a very little girl, and we saw in the distance the exhibition of the peripatetic dramatic show of Punch and Judy, and she of course wanted to go and look at it, and so did I. We went and stood in the crowd, and what I saw was this, that at the beginning of the representation, although the leading character laid about him pretty well with his club, and there was an interchange of blows in moderation, it was when the coffin was brought up that the blows rained fast and furious and the tragedy ended in an exhibition of wrath and indignation. I thought to myself (I hope that the humble quality of the illustration will not offend any of my brethren outside our own circle) that it was a very lively image of the termination of the Croydon Congress; and I could not help thinking that if they feel so strongly against dead Dissenters, what must be their real inward feeling towards live ones?

"Then next we come to the Methodists. God bless the mighty organizations which have sprung out of the labours of John Wesley! and incline the heart of the new Conference to a little relieving of the preachers from their bondage, so far as requiring subscription to all and everything not left an open question in John Wesley's writings. I almost think I saw at Bristol the handle of a silver poker down the open mouth of Methodism.

"Last of all, in this rapid survey of the great religious organizations around us, you have the Presbyterians. Presbyterianism, both in Scotland and in England, has glorious traditions and a creed which, even in its sternest

aspects, has much to do with the production of the stalwart Scottish nation. But here again they say, privately at least, both north and south of the Tweed, that a little less inflexibility in forcing those terrible old standards down the throats of the young ministers, a little less resolution to load them up to the muzzle with those old cartridges and shells, would enable them all the better to fight the battle of substantial orthodoxy, with less danger of bursting out into heresy and revolution.

"Now we must come home. What about the flexibility of Independency? I think I may say that it is a flexibility which is of inestimable value in the present day, first of all in matters relating to the search for truth, secondly in matters relating to its internal organization, and thirdly in matters relating to its action on the outer world. Its flexibility, in relation to the search for truth, I attribute to the absence of any system of rigid subscription, of any system of synodal authority, and of any overpowering personal influence, or influence of the Press. We do not give ourselves over, bound hand and foot, to any synods or sanhedrins. We stand on the principle that God is making a revelation by His Spirit to every man who is willing to receive it. There was once a *savant* in Paris who enclosed some tadpoles in a box perforated with holes, and then placed it at the bottom of the Seine, out of the light, and he found that the tadpoles only developed into bigger tadpoles, and did not become frogs. It is just the same with minds. There is no such thing as development and growth in character apart from light. We agree upon the standard, and then we agree to examine that standard, to study the Scriptures, and see whether the things are so which our teachers have told us." Having thus shown the flexibility of Independency, he proceeded to argue that the question of personal association was one on which each man who thinks seriously must determine for himself as before God; and that the attempt to make

Unitarians and Deists and Evangelical believers live together in unity will no more succeed than an attempt to make sulphur and saltpetre and charcoal live peaceably together when a spark drops into the combination.

This was the part of the speech which brought down upon him the attack of those who desired that the Congregational Union should embrace Churches and ministers who, as he had expressed it, "believe nothing particular." And he had to defend himself against the charge of "atoning for a pet heresy by being specially hard on every other," and that of having turned his back upon his former self in respect of liberty of thought and speech. This he did in several vigorous letters to the *Christian World* in the remainder of that year and in the early part of 1878. In one of these he wrote: "I know that it appears a monstrous inconsistency, to those who are but superficially acquainted with my convictions, that a person who has persisted in a long battle against one of the reputedly orthodox doctrines, should stand forward to counsel resistance to proposals that sound so catholic and comprehensive, and should speak so severely of Unitarianism, its criticism, its doctrine, and its spirit. It is therefore needful again to explain that a closer study of our position will prove that such resistance to Unitarianism is the necessary consequence of our convictions. Other Christian people have a good reason for so doing. To us there is a second reason, arising from our faith that the Incarnation was the union of the divine Life with humanity in order to save it from perishing, and that the spiritual union with Christ is the condition of salvation for all who hear the Gospel."

On November 6, 1877, Mr. White read a paper on "The Office of the Deacon in the Free Churches," at a meeting largely composed of such deacons and held at the Memorial Hall. After referring to the different conceptions of the office entertained by the Anglican Church and

by the Free Churches, he said: "In Christ's Church, as founded by the apostles, the whole body of the people, the *laity*, are the priesthood under Christ the High Priest. Not some of the Lord's people are priests to the exclusion of others. All are such. 'Ye are a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices.' There is then no official distinction under the Gospel answering to that between the sacrificing *Cohen* of the law with his assisting Levites and the people. To introduce such distinctions is to go back again to the 'beggarly elements.' We are all priests unto God. This is the true sacerdotalism. The offices of the Church of Christ were based on the customs and ideas of the Synagogue, not on those of the Temple. The Jewish Synagogue was the point of departure for the Church in every city. In the Synagogue there were the elders with a president, or ruler; and there were the assistants, or secondary officials, discharging various functions in aid of the elders. Here was the original of the (1) Elders, or superintendents, and (2) of the Deacons, who were ordained as helpers in the Church of Christ."

The supreme importance of the spiritual qualifications of those holding office in a society existing for spiritual ends was insisted on; also that none should be appointed who do not possess suitable gifts and training. And a plea was introduced for not only maintaining the solemn ordination of pastors, but for a similar public induction of deacons to their office. Recognizing that the particular duties of deacons must vary with varying circumstances, Mr. White urged the desirability of a distribution of the duties among the deacons where there are several, so that each might be specially responsible for his own special department, but under the general superintendence of the body of deacons and the pastor. He enlarged upon the importance of the office, as bearing upon the true prosperity of the Church at all times, but more especially when without a pastor. He said: "The Church is a home, a



school and college of instruction, a hospital for sick souls, a factory of industrial work, and finally a temple of the living God. There is no nobler work given to men than to carry out these divine ends, and so to regulate affairs as to make the Church, next to Christ, the light of the world."

In the following month, at a meeting of the Liberation Society at Coventry, Mr. White spoke on the religious aspects of Disestablishment, and he made a sketch of what he considered would be the most desirable attitude to be assumed by Anglicans and Nonconformists in prospect of that event, and the most desirable state of things afterwards. In a long letter to the *Nonconformist* about the same time he further develops this theme, dealing with the probable results of Disestablishment upon—(1) The Church of England, (2) Nonconformity, and (3) Christianity considered as an interest higher than either. He expresses the opinion that if no strong national movement towards Protestant unity takes place, a movement in which the Nonconformist Churches heartily join, the effect of the old ecclesiastical rivalries will be to greatly consolidate the Anglican community by pressure from without, and thereby greatly to intensify the evils that come with a widely extended and uncontrolled hierarchial authority. In this case there would be no improvement in the social relations of the various Churches, and the Nonconformist communities would make a new departure, each on the lines of ancient sectarian peculiarities. Not having been able at that time to foresee the Federation Movement among the Free Churches, which has made such rapid advance of late, he goes on to deprecate such a result and asks: "Is it utterly beyond the reach of English Christianity for the people who are most in earnest in the faith of Christ, in the desire to show the practical results of faith, in the passion for making the great world of outsiders partakers of these benefits, to seize the opportunity of Disestablish-

ment when it arrives, for reviewing their own ecclesiastical position, and for manfully throwing off the evil traditions which hinder the better organization of the followers of Christ's holy Gospel? Is it utterly impossible that some working fusion should be effected, in every locality, of the forces which are on the side of Christ, in opposition to those which are against Him? Is it beyond the range of 'practical politics' to ask whether we had not better meditate, all round, on casting away some of the superstitions of the past, and on asserting in every neighbourhood the spiritual unity in worship and in work which may subsist between all who acknowledge a common authority and agree upon a few fundamentals of faith? . . . Consider what a new life it would pour into every locality if the idea were once to become popular that the Protestant Christians of that locality were 'one body' recognizing each other as servants of God and organizing their forces for the benefit of the neighbourhood! Consider what a blessing it would be for the Anglicans of every parish to know intimately their fellow-Christians who had been bred as Nonconformists, and I will add, what a blessing it would be for the latter to know a little better the good people of the episcopal community. . . . That such a consummation would involve the abolition of the English prelacy and the restoration of local apostolic Episcopacy and Independency; that it would demand the overthrow of extreme sacerdotalism, of the mild Methodist despotism, of all synods undertaking to govern the life of Christians from a metropolitan centre; that it would require the sacrifice in one good bonfire of those old Tests and Confessions of Faith and Books of Articles, and Full Declarations of Faith and Order which are now causing so much trouble to men's understandings and so much entanglement to men's consciences; that it would compel the cessation of those anti-Christian claims to exclusive validity in their clerical orders which now form the 'joy and crown' of

Anglican priesthood ; that it would also inflict a final and desperate blow on the prospects of many unqualified pretenders to the pastoral office who now degrade the very idea of a public teacher of truth, one must frankly allow. But if these sacrifices were followed by a fresh lease of popular faith in Christianity, if the alienated masses of the working population were conciliated and won over by the spectacle of Christian union, if truer, deeper sympathies were awakened between man and man in every town and in every village, the nation would therein find a sufficient compensation for the disappearance of those complete confessions of faith which nobody entirely believes in, of the party spirit which dishonours us, and of those territorial hierarchies who have subverted the district liberties of Christendom."

An address given by Mr. White in this same month of December to the students at the Stockwell Training College for female teachers may here be mentioned. He was asked to address specially those just about to enter upon the active work of teaching. After congratulating the students on their choice of the teaching profession, although it is one of the most laborious, he went on to speak of the wonders of growth and development, and the interest with which these may be watched, whether in plant life or in human life, and it is the teacher's business to foster such interest. He pointed out the distinction between education and instruction, reminding them that both were within their sphere, and spoke of the necessity for physical as well as mental culture, and their own need for plenty of fresh air and exercise in order to keep themselves in good health and in good spirits and good temper, and so to be able to teach effectively. "The truth must be mixed with oxygen in them that teach it as well as in them that hear it." With regard to the teaching he gave a few useful hints, urging the teachers to strive after thoroughness in the teaching of elements, to try to infuse

into the pupils a taste for reading, to teach clear pronunciation, a proper distinction in the use of adjectives, and the history of our own country, the great aim being to kindle in the children an interest in the subjects taught. He closed with a few words as to the religious aspect of the teacher's work, the great advantages now enjoyed by the female sex in our time and country, and the high ideal of womanhood which they should strive after and inculcate.

In March 1878 Mr. Henry Dunn, who was for many years Secretary of the British and Foreign School Society, died, and was buried at Norwood in the presence of a large company of friends. He had been a good friend to Mr. White, even in the days when he had been under a kind of proscription, and had written in his vindication. It was therefore fitting that Mr. White should be, as he was, one of those who officiated at his funeral.

At this time he was earnest in deprecating war on behalf of Turkey, for which many persons in England, chiefly Conservatives, were loudly calling. Happily the counsels of prudence prevailed.

In this year 1878 Mr. White began his monthly Sunday evening Lectures to Artizans, which were continued until he retired from the pastorate. On those occasions the usual occupants of the seats on the ground floor were asked either to stay away or to go into the gallery, so as to leave the whole of the ground area for the artizans. These Sunday evening lectures were really attended and appreciated by the class of skilled workmen for whom they were specially prepared. A mechanic who was recovering from illness, and upon whom Mr. White called, told him that these lectures were known all over London, and had produced a great effect in the factories in that region. He said that he was personally acquainted with a large number of the men who were accustomed to attend, and told of a fellow-workman, an atheist, whom he had himself



induced to go with him to the lecture on John's Gospel in 1881, and who was so moved that at the close, when asked what he thought of it, he answered only by tears. That they had a beneficial effect in the neighbourhood generally was also indicated by the testimony of City missionaries and others, who asserted that in Kentish Town, where such workmen are very numerous, infidelity had been considerably checked, and there were no atheists among them. To show the attractiveness of these lectures, the following quotation from a letter written by Mr. White on April 6, 1880, may here be introduced. Addressing Mr. Knight, one of the deacons who was then absent, he said :—

“Last Sunday evening the lecture was attended by an overwhelming crowd, really the fullest ever seen, *two* chairs abreast up both aisles, and the lobby and vestry both full. This achievement of two chairs abreast is looked upon as a local triumph of Christianity. I wish it were! The moral drawn by the deacons is to put up those flaps at once. But the Reformation was an attractive subject, and we shall soon sink back to the *one* chair state.”

It may be added that the flaps referred to were put up at the end of all the seats, and were afterwards often used.

Lectures of similar character are at the present time delivered on Sundays monthly by Dr. Horton at Lyndhurst Road Church, Hampstead, and these are a direct outcome of Mr. White's. In the course of his lecture on July 7, 1901, at the end of twenty-one years, Dr. Horton, speaking of 1880, said :—

“Just at that time my friend and neighbour, the Rev. Edward White, had recommenced his monthly lectures to working men, and he was endeavouring in the most remarkable way to expound the Scriptures and to bring all the confirmations that archæology and science had made familiar to him within the reach of the artizans of Kentish Town. I ventured in my very boyish way to follow the example of my distinguished and venerated

friend. I began those workmen's lectures at his suggestion, intending to continue them for twelve months, but they went on for four years in the iron room where, at that time, we worshipped in the Willoughby Road ; and then this building was erected, and exactly seventeen years ago this evening this building was used for the first Sunday service, and the first evening service in this building was a workmen's lecture, the title of which was, ' A Welcome to the New Church.' "

At Mill Hill School, on Foundation Day, in June of this year (1878), Mr. White spoke of the value of a classical and mathematical training in turning out men who know that something can be absolutely proved, and are not mere rhetoricians. Present-day problems — social, political, religious, and theological—demand minds cultivated and trained to think, and to appreciate moral evidence, and mathematical training is a preparatory exercise for that.

At Bishops Stortford School, in the following month, he gave an address on a comparison between ancient Greek and modern English education. The Greeks aimed at strengthening and developing the beauty of body and the power of mind, and made a nation that conquered the world. Modern education is based on religion, inspired by revelation, and its main aim is the formation of character. In our day we require men, not mere machines ; wills, not mere passions ; men for whom the world will make way. Courage is needed in both the search for and the confession of truth.

Mr. White's holiday this year was spent at and in the neighbourhood of Penmaenmawr, with his wife and several members of his family, in the latter part of August and beginning of September. At that place he met with some prominent ministers who were also taking holiday. While there he prepared, and preached in the presence of many of these, a striking sermon on the impression made by Jesus Christ upon His contemporaries, some of whom said " that

Elijah had appeared," while others were reminded of John the Baptist or one of the old prophets. Evidently to these observers His appearance was "far different from that represented in the most noted pictures and hymns, of the all-gentle Jesus. Was He then not gentle too? Yes, indeed He was. There is no tenderness like that of the strongest men. . . . Just as John has been drawn half a girl, whereas he was a Son of Thunder; so Jesus, the Son of God, has been drawn so much as the Son of Mary that men have forgotten that some said 'Elijah had appeared.' . . . The strength of Jesus attracted the weakest as much as the strongest, as the sun draws after him the tiniest satellite as well as the mightiest worlds" This sermon on "The Sternness and Tenderness of Jesus" he afterwards preached in various parts of the country.

Natural history was throughout his life a subject of frequent study by Mr. White. It is recorded in his note-book that on September 18th of this year he watched a spider outside his study window making his third web that week, its predecessors having been blown down by wind and rain. He thus describes the process as observed: "His vision must have taken in the area of his web and the fastening places of the outer lines. He pulled out with one leg the line from his spinners, as far as his leg would stretch, and that was enough to fill the space between the two radiants. He fastened the fresh line with the other foot of the same pair, the front. Later on he dabbed his spinners down on the radiant at the part in the line which measured the exact distance." A further note dated ten days later states: "Spider still at work, web after web, catching about two flies a day and a brace of flylets—a pheasant and two partridges." This is a good illustration of the minuteness with which he examined and observed, always with a view to the use of such observations in his public teaching.

The autumnal meetings of the Congregational Union in

1878 were held in Liverpool, and there Mr. White was the guest of Mr. Samuel Smith. He delivered an address to working men on the subject of "Reading." This address was both instructive and humorous, and its delivery was punctuated with applause and laughter. At the outset the speaker declared that what he wanted to say concerned as much, or more, those who were not working men, as he did not believe in the salvation of the people by class lecturing, or by class reading. "England is one, and our reading ought to unite not separate us. . . . We cannot exaggerate the importance of what a man reads, and therefore we cannot exaggerate the importance of what a man prints and his responsibility for it." He spoke of reading for entertainment and amusement, for political information, and for religious ends, or purposes hostile to religion, and dealt with the use and abuse of each of these kinds of reading. The address was fully reported in the *English Independent* of October 24th. It might be reprinted as a tract with a good prospect of being useful.

The death of Mrs. Ranyard, his eldest sister, was to Mr. White a very sensible loss, as there had been, from his childhood, a very close sympathy between them. What she had been to him in early life has been already mentioned. In later life he had materially aided her in her literary and beneficent enterprises. Her death occurred on February 11, 1879. At her funeral service, in the Scotch Church, Regent Square, Mr. White took a leading part, and also spoke at the cemetery at Norwood, telling of the beginning of her active interest in, and care for, the poor in the cottages around their father's house.

The desirability of publishing a French edition of *Life in Christ* having been considered by Mr. White, he had made an arrangement with Mr. Charles Byse, a Swiss pastor, and one thoroughly competent both as linguist and theologian, who had been introduced to him by Dr.



E. Petavel<sup>†</sup> some years previously, to undertake the work of translation. Dr. Petavel also had promised his help in the revision.

In the autumn of 1879, Mr. White, with his wife, visited Paris and Switzerland, and was thus able to confer personally with both of these friends. Mr. Byse was then residing in Paris, and editing a weekly religious newspaper. Mr. White remained in Paris a few days in conference with Mr. Byse, and revisited the art collections in the Luxembourg, the Louvre, &c.; he then went on to Lausanne, and after a day and a half there, proceeded by steamer to Geneva. Dr. Petavel was then residing in a villa formerly the property and residence of the celebrated historian Sismondi, at Chêne Bougeries, a village a little distance from Geneva. Thither the travellers made their way in a carriage, and there were received by the friends with warm hospitality. While there Mr. White was laid up for three days, but with that exception this visit was full of interest and pleasure. One day, having driven to Mornex, on the slope of the Salève, they there met Gustave Doré, with whom Mr. White had a long conversation, partly relating to the Bible, which the artist was then illustrating. Returning by way of Paris, one day was again spent in that city, affording an opportunity for

<sup>†</sup> Dr. E. Petavel's first introduction to Mr. White was in 1861, on the occasion of a visit paid by the latter, in company with his sister, Mrs. Ranyard, to Dr. Petavel's father, Abram F. Petavel, Professor in and Rector of the Academy of Neuchâtel, at his house in that town, Rocher Saint Jean. Two years later, not knowing Mr. White's theological views, Dr. E. Petavel became pastor of the Swiss Church in London and intimate with Mr. White, having himself previously and independently attained the conviction that the end of the impenitent must be destruction. From Mr. White he learnt to look at the question of human destiny from the positive standpoint, regarding as the subject of chief importance the offer of immortality to dying men through union with Jesus Christ by faith. This community of belief brought the two men into very intimate relation, which continued to the end of Mr. White's life. Dr. Petavel has become the principal propagator of these ideas in France and Switzerland, where his success has been considerable. (*See Appendix C.*)

further conference with Mr. Byse as to his translation, which at that time was already in the press, though it was not published until early in 1880.

In December of this year Mr. White paid a visit to Dr. Perowne, then Dean of Peterborough, and spent the Sunday before Christmas there, witnessing in the Cathedral the Ordination of Deacons and Priests in accordance with the Anglican ritual. He noticed that in this service the priests as well as the Bishop lay their hands on the heads of those to be ordained, and this he regards as a relic of the ancient presbyterial ordination. He sympathized with and admired a good deal of the service, but was greatly annoyed with the "intoning," as to which he wrote: "I spent the Sunday in hearing them intone everything, till I was nearly ill. I wonder they don't intone their sermons. The Dean has tried to stop them, but they won't. They go on just like barrel-organs, and I believe nothing but death will stop them. The Bishop sent for me, and we had a good talk on theological matters. They have all read my books, and it seems to me with very good effect. . . . I must say I enjoyed our little service last night a hundred times better than all that intoning, which comes to nothing and means nothing."

Earlier in the same month he had read a carefully prepared paper on "Moral Education in Schools" at a meeting in the Memorial Hall of the "Society for the Development of the Science of Education." The paper took the form of a review of the chapter on that subject in Professor Alexander Bain's work on *Education as a Science*. It is far too long for insertion here, but some characteristic sentences may well be introduced. "The old writers on morals used to distinguish between virtues of perfect, and those of imperfect, obligation. The law of *justice* regards all duties of perfect obligation. The rule of *charity* or benevolence, requiring such acts as giving money to the poor, returning good for evil, totally abstain-

ing from things lawful, regards duties of imperfect obligation. Obedience to the first law is absolutely required in order that a man may be good at all and cease to be a wrong-doer. Obedience to the second is not compulsory in any particular instance. . . . Now one of the chief dangers of the moral teaching of our time is, to spend so much effort in enforcing counsels of perfection, duties of imperfect obligation, as to lead to the neglect of the essential foundation in virtues of perfect obligation—the virtues of temperance, truth, justice, and honesty. . . . Counsels of perfection are not the proper aliment of youth. But nothing is of greater importance than to establish the reign of justice in schools—justice in the exercise of authority, justice as between the pupils themselves. . . . Boys should hear of the law of right, and of doing rightly, and should experience the penalties of doing wrongly, a great deal sooner and oftener than they should hear of forgiveness for doing wrongly. If this modern disposition to dwell so disproportionately on the virtues of imperfect obligation continues, one would like to know where the iron-backed men of principle needed for the nation's work in the future are to come from. Now in all this of course I do not wish to speak a word against grace and charity and tenderness in their proper place and proportion, but only to redress the balance and to see restored the equilibrium of the virtues in education."

## CHAPTER XI

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE "LIFE IN CHRIST" CONTROVERSY

1876-1883; AGE 56-64

THE publication of Mr. White's new book, *Life in Christ*, in 1875, naturally called forth a number of reviews and criticisms, and some of these proved useful in the preparation of the later editions. It was also the occasion to the author of a good deal of private correspondence. As a specimen of the letters received may be given the following, from a prominent Christian gentleman in Liverpool, whose friendship, initiated by this correspondence, became a source of great pleasure to Mr. White, and whose sympathy in his work was to the end of his life a great support and comfort. The letter bears date May 3, 1876, and is as follows:—

"DEAR SIR,—I wish to say to you how deeply interested I have been in reading your book entitled *Life in Christ*; it has sent a thrill through my whole nature, and stirred me in a way no book has done for many years. The reason of this is, that I have been for many years deeply exercised about the destiny of mankind, and at times have felt awfully afflicted by the thought of the orthodox doctrine concerning the unsaved.

"A firm believer myself in the Lord Jesus, and never doubting my own salvation since my conversion, a good



many years ago, I felt that I could not have peace or joy while the bulk of mankind were exposed to *endless* torment, nor could I reconcile it with the character of God, as delineated in Scripture and as revealed in the person of His Son. For several years I have only half believed the doctrine, though unable to see clearly on Scriptural grounds how I could escape from receiving it. I had been taught to accept as a matter of course the doctrine of the soul's immortality, and as the Scriptures negative the idea of the ultimate recovery of the unsaved, there seemed no alternative but the orthodox view. It was a year or two ago that the idea of the soul's *conditional* immortality was first suggested to me from a public discussion in this neighbourhood (in Birkenhead); it flashed across my mind like a light from above, and I have since been reading the Bible with this thought before me, testing it by the Word of God. Your book came into my hands just as my mind was open to receive it, and it presented a coherent view of the whole matter which has impressed me most forcibly with its truthfulness; indeed, the arguments from Scripture seem to me to be conclusive.

"The difficulty with me, as it must be with many, is that your view is so new to most Christians, and is looked upon as so dangerous and delusive by most leaders of the Christian Church, that one feels staggered, and almost unable to resist the powerful influence brought to bear upon him. Indeed I feel that to me it would be a kind of martyrdom to avow such opinions, for I am deeply interested in religious work in this town, and identified with many evangelical associations, and in daily contact with earnest and influential Christians, nearly all of whom, I suppose, would look upon a lapse to your views as a heresy that would disqualify from Christian work. Consequently I might be shut out from working for the Lord Jesus in great measure, which is the great end of my life, and the thought of this is very painful to me. Still, I feel

I could cheerfully endure all this were I *perfectly certain* that your views are true, and that God is with us ; but I have not yet reached this full assurance ; if I do reach it, I would feel it my duty to avow it, for what has been so great a relief to my mind should not be concealed from others. I would much like to meet with you, and converse more fully regarding these things. Should you be in this neighbourhood I would be delighted to see you, or if agreeable I might call upon you some time in London. Meanwhile I will write to your publisher to send me several copies of your book for circulation among friends, and believe me, dear sir, yours very truly,

“SAMUEL SMITH.”

Mr. White promptly replied, thus :—

“MY DEAR SIR,—Your interesting letter resembles many which I have received during the past thirty years. I deeply sympathize with you in this disturbance of the social equilibrium which the entrance of these views causes. But a prudent conduct on the part of men of character and position seldom brings the believer in these ideas into much discomfort. No man is called upon to proclaim thoughts for which the generality are not prepared, in miscellaneous companies, even when he is thoroughly convinced of their truth. The truth, if truth it be, on Life eternal ranks with truth on Predestination and on the Advent of Christ, &c., and is best spoken to prepared minds. These prepared minds are : (1) Those whose faith is endangered by the prevalent notions, and (2) Christians sufficiently established and instructed in Scripture to encourage them to study ‘the whole counsel of God.’ Some whole neighbourhoods are more prepared than others. Now and then a wise introduction of the topic by a lecture may do good, but I don’t think Mr. Warleigh is very wise, and probably more harm than good was done at Birkenhead.

"It is getting to be understood that persons of the greatest weight in learning and piety are adopting these views. Dr. Dale is a thoroughly competent critic and a devout, prayerful thinker. Professor Stokes of Cambridge is the first mathematician in England and a very earnest Christian.

"Long after the judgement is convinced, the old idea haunts the mind as possibly true. I know no remedy for this except mastering the right principle of interpretation and then incessantly reading the Bible. We are only applying to this subject the orthodox rule of interpretation applied to the Scriptures on all other topics, *i.e.*, the rule of taking the natural or literal sense of the general expressions.

"But what persuades my own mind is the complete *wheel* of truth which appears when the thing is explained as in my book. So perfect a circle, so many spokes all converging, so firm an axis, could not be the effect of error and heresy. Whereas under orthodoxy there is no real system at all, all a mass of incredibility and confusion. This is what is carrying conviction to thousands.

"I pray that you may be rightly led as to your public course. 'Privately to them of reputation' seems the right course, at all events at first. It can scarcely be right to sacrifice all your other usefulness by a sudden avowal of opinion to unprepared minds. Every year is making such avowal easier, but my general counsel is for prudence, not precipitation. One class of men I except—public teachers, ministers of position. I believe their duty *is* avowal as helping others. In London my own undisguised avowal hinders me in no good work or desirable fellowship.

"If you are in London pray call on me. But send me a card first. Shall you be up next week or sooner?

"Faithfully yours,

"EDWARD WHITE."

In this connection, as indicating the effect upon personal religious character of the belief in the doctrine of "Life in Christ," may be introduced an extract from a letter written by Mr. White to the same correspondent in 1889, after his retirement from active pastoral work. He wrote thus:—

"As to my own pursuits, I had hoped to write some things. But my brain has been enfeebled by tough work for many years, and rest now for a time seems necessary. The general review of the *past* is a crowded panorama of mercies and enjoyments and marvellous providential friendships, yours especially among the number. I cannot doubt the substantial correctness of the objects aimed at, because I have found that they all led me more and more to Christ and brought me into close friendship and love with such people as heaven *must* consist of for its company. Yet this firm and thankful retrospect of assent to the main ends is accompanied with so much sense of hidden and open personal failure that I seem to lose my interest in the fate of my own name on earth, in the much more real thought of the judgement of the Master. I have taken, I well know, a great and awful responsibility, but I think He has kept me patient under temporary rejection, and wishful only that Truth shall triumph. I dare say that you pray for me sometimes, that the *end* may be peace."

As, in an earlier chapter, it has been shown that on an old age retrospect of his career he felt no regret at having forsaken the pursuit of worldly gain for the endeavour to win souls, so also in late life his conviction had become stronger than ever that the special doctrine he had endeavoured with so much ability and success to propagate was the very truth of God, and worth all the sacrifice that its advocacy had involved for himself. And his whole life and career, with its earnest endeavours persisted in for so many years to persuade dying men to "flee from the



wrath to come" and to "save their souls alive," was a striking refutation of the assertion that the effect of holding this doctrine must be to diminish the preacher's sense of the value of the human unit,<sup>1</sup> and his earnestness in trying to win back the fallen to the only path that leads to the life eternal.

One of the principal events in relation to the controversy in the year 1876 was a Breakfast Conference held at the Cannon Street Hotel and presided over by Lieut.-General Goodwyn. This meeting was arranged for testimony, not for debate; the speakers represented a considerable variety of social and ecclesiastical attachments, while the large attendance included many ministers of various denominations: Anglican, Baptist, Congregational, ex-Brethren, as well as representatives of the Army, of Art, Business, Education, Literature, Medicine, and Science.

With an old soldier to preside, the proceedings were orderly and harmonious. The first speaker called upon was Rev. Samuel Minton, M.A., a man whose powerful advocacy of the doctrine of "Life in Christ" was always couched in such kindly terms as to disarm opponents, and whose steady friendship, as long as he lived, was a great help and support to Mr. White. The task assigned to Mr. Minton was a brief statement of the main position in which Conditionalists all agree, while differing on some minor points. One extract from his speech may not be out of place here, since the objection which it was designed to meet is still sometimes brought against the doctrine. Having spoken of the objection on moral grounds urged from the Universalist side, he said: "We confess ourselves unable to see any force in the objections made either to the theory of human perishableness or the belief that some

<sup>1</sup> The value of the human unit depends upon and indeed consists in the capacity for reception in regeneration of a new and immortal life. It may be compared to the wild fruit-tree, which is of little or no value until it has been grafted.

human beings will actually perish. Some of the objections can be distinctly answered now, and the rest we can easily believe will be answered abundantly by the result. Briefly, we say that to pronounce it a degradation to humanity for any single human germ which reaches some undefined point of development not to live as long as the Creator Himself is surely the *ne plus ultra* of human self-exaltation. The great marvel we hold to be that any creature should do so. But to suppose that every member of the entire race, and that a fallen one, must necessarily have an everlasting life of some kind or other, we maintain to be as arbitrary, as unreasonable, and as extravagant an assumption as could enter the mind of man."

The next speaker was Dr. Leask, whose subject was "Life in Christ and Christian Missions." After his speech the Chairman called upon Mr. White, who was to speak more especially on the conduct of the religious Press in relation to the subject of Conditional Immortality. He began by referring to some of the causes of the present-day scepticism, and the necessity for abandoning all such defences of Christianity as are shown to be untenable before the objections of scientists. As he expressed it: "There is great danger to popular faith from some of the results of modern inquiry; but the ship may be saved by throwing overboard the worthless part of the cargo." He pointed out that neither on physical nor on metaphysical grounds can survival in death be confidently anticipated; the moral argument alone suggesting it in order to retribution. "But," he said, "conscience does not teach a good man that he deserves for his goodness in time an endless reward; nor does it teach a wicked man that he deserves an endless penalty. The whole subject of survival, therefore, is covered with darkness. Man, by the study of his own nature, finds in it no pledge of immortality. . . . In this crisis of European thought, God in His providence is directing the attention of many minds to an anciently

revealed but long-forgotten truth, precisely adapted to meet the present needs of mankind and to maintain and exalt the public faith in Christ and Christianity. That truth is, that Redemption lays down as its very basis and first principle the fact which Biology lays down as its last conclusion, the total mortality or evanescence of man in the present condition of his nature ; with this difference, that science concludes on man's total mortality not knowing the reason of the fact, while revelation declares that man's death is abnormal and the result of sin. The Bible nowhere teaches an inherent immortality, but teaches that it is the object of redemption to impart it." He then proceeded to speak of the attitude of the religious Press towards this teaching, that being generally hostile, and so far as it refers to the doctrine at all it usually misrepresents it ; but he mentioned the *Contemporary Review* and the *Christian World* as honourable exceptions, for the latter, while advocating editorially the " mischievous delusion " of the salvation of all men, has always allowed a fair representation of the doctrine of " Conditional Immortality."

Mr. White then said, as he has often said elsewhere, that the greatest calamity that could happen to this movement would be that it should fall into the hands of a set of narrow-minded men who would be anxious for nothing else, and engaged in no other good works ; who would be concerned to spread no other truths ; or who should labour to spread these ideas only in a negative form, as a doctrine of extinction, apart from their vital connection with the whole divine revelation ; or lastly, into the hands of men who deny all that revelation positively teaches on future punishment, on the action of evil spirits, and on the incarnation and atonement of the Son of God. " These ideas," he said, " will benefit the world only as they are proclaimed by men who fear God, by men who love Christ, by men who are superior to the childish passion of forming a sect or party with a fanciful name, by men who truly

labour for the salvation of souls." In closing he showed how exactly this doctrine is suited to meet the case of the millions of Asia, and finished by claiming that the religious Press ought to assist the investigation of the subject, quoting the saying of Robert Hall: "The evils of controversy are all transitory, but its benefits are all permanent and eternal."

The other speakers were Prebendary Constable, Rev. J. B. Heard, M.A., Rev. Arthur Mursell, Rev. J. F. B. Tinling, B.A., and Mr. Starkey. Professor Barrett, F.R.S.E., of Dublin, would have spoken had time permitted. Of the speakers at this meeting the majority are no longer living to continue their testimony, but that which they then delivered remains; a full report of the speeches was at once published in pamphlet form, with an introduction by Mr. Samuel Smith, and before the year closed nearly fifty thousand copies had been issued to ministers and missionaries at home and abroad.

In March 1877 Mr. White's semi-jubilee was celebrated, on the 21st, by a public meeting in the chapel at Hawley Road. Mr. Henry Richard, M.P., would have presided if he had not engaged to be at the Memorial Hall that evening. In his absence Mr. White himself took the chair, and in opening the proceedings explained that the purpose of this public gathering was not a retrospect of personal or private experiences, but a review of the course of English history during the past quarter of a century, in order to call attention to some elements of progress noticeable therein. Among the letters from friends who were unable to be present was a touching one from Mr. Edward Miall, the first he had attempted to write with his own hand for nearly a year, in which he said: "I thank you for asking me to your proposed meeting on the 21st inst., and send you my heartiest congratulations on the occasion of it. I cannot come. Anything like a public meeting would



knock me to pieces in my present state of nervous debility. I trust, however, that your meeting will be all that you can wish."

Mr. White then enumerated some of the principal events that had occurred during those twenty-five years, outside as well as within our own borders, including the rise of the second French Empire and its fall through the Franco-German War, the Crimean War, the Indian Mutiny, the establishment of a united Italy, the American Civil War and abolition of negro slavery, the Vatican Council and its decree of papal infallibility, besides many great improvements in our own legislative, political, social, and religious life. He spoke of the wonderful confirmation of Scripture history by discoveries in the East, and of the general advance of various kinds of knowledge. But he acknowledged that there were some drawbacks: a revival of sacerdotal tastes on one side, and of semi-scientific materialism and atheistic scepticism on the other, these, however, being in their influence mutually destructive, so as to leave the field clearer for the progress of Scriptural Christianity. But this, he said, would depend on Englishmen maintaining in vigour their ancient noble passion for honest and open discussion.

Turning then to the subject of most vital interest to himself and his congregation, he said: "On the deepest questions of all there have arisen debates during the past quarter of a century affecting the interpretation to be put upon the Bible regarded as a Revelation of Everlasting Life. In these discussions we have, as a Church, from the beginning taken some share. We have no cause in our own spiritual experience to regret it. The effort has cost us dear, but the cause has consecrated the needful sacrifices. The doctrine that neither natural reason nor Scripture represent man as, by his birth, endowed with endless and indestructible being—that the prospect of such endless life in the divine image is lost by sin; that the very object of

the Incarnation was to immortalize, as well as to sanctify and save, mankind ; and, finally, that none but the ' sons of God ' by a ' second birth ' are destined to eternal life, is still regarded with great hostility and suspicion. The ancient doctrine of an endless misery has been widely shaken. But it has been largely replaced for a time by various types of Universalism, or the doctrine of the final salvation of all mankind. Able men can throw a glamour of argument around almost every theory ; but if the New Testament was written to teach this doctrine, it is to me the most unintelligible book in the world, and, for my part, I believe that the effect of preaching that doctrine will, by abolishing fear, work deep spiritual mischief among men. It has done so in America, and it will do so in England. Indeed, it seems to me that the *tone* of the whole Bible is far more like to that of the old theology in the representation of the judgements of God against sinners, than it is to the tone of this false gospel of love, so-called, which will make no *Felix tremble*. Bishop Butler's grave warning, that it is possible to make much too free with the divine goodness, requires in some quarters to be pondered afresh."

After having read a letter from Mr. Thos. Walker, late editor of the *Daily News*, Mr. White gave place to the succeeding speakers, who were Rev. J. B. Heard, M.A., Dr. Dale, Dr. Underhill, and Rev. Samuel Minton, M.A. Dr. Dale's speech on this occasion was so interesting and important, and extracts from it have been so often quoted that it seems desirable to reprint it almost in its entirety as an appendix,<sup>1</sup> so that such quotations may be seen in their original and natural connections.

At the more private meeting of the Church which was held the following evening, a review of the Church work in the twenty-five years was read by Mr. Carter, the senior deacon, and a presentation was made to Mr. White in the form of a hundred guineas, and an album.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix D,

About this time Mr. White had to defend himself against a renewed attack from the Universalist side. The Rev. J. Baldwin Brown published, in the *Christian World*, his second series of lectures on what he had called "The Miserable Doctrine of Annihilation" (see p. 75), and Mr. White replied in a series of four letters to that periodical. These, together with three letters by the Rev. Samuel Minton, M.A., in reply to Mr. Baldwin Brown's former lectures on the subject, and originally published in the *Christian World* in 1875, were afterwards published as a pamphlet of eighty pages under the title *Life and Death*.

In his first letter, after having expressed his gratitude to Mr. Brown for having broken the silence so generally maintained by leading ministers in relation to the questions of man's nature and destiny, although it was done in terms of scant courtesy to himself, and in opposition to his convictions, Mr. White asserts that Scripture must decide the question of a future state for man, since that is the only source of certain knowledge on the subject; and that the silence and the speech of Scripture are both in favour of Life in Christ only. He writes:—

"We are 'nowhere' in the theological world if we have not a solid basis in Revelation. It is not, as Mr. Brown repeats *ad nauseam*, that we weakly suppose we glorify God's grace by a ruthless dishonouring of humanity. It is that we think we take the measure of humanity from the testimony of its Maker, and read its destiny in the pages of His message to the world.

"We are placed in this difficulty: we have to choose between the lofty speculations of Mr. Brown respecting human nature as such, and the far less exalted statements of the apostles and prophets. It seems to us impossible to reconcile the two. Mr. Brown, like Dr. South, has drawn for us, with a splendid astronomical background, a striking picture of Adam in Paradise, and of the constitutional place of humanity in the great universe. Man was created

unconditionally in the image of God, and this includes God's eternity. This transcendent attribute of endless being has never been lost, can never be lost. Well, such is the realistic turn of my mind that, in reading Mr. Brown's almost enthusiastic eloquence on this head, I wished he could have been permitted to deliver that lecture to Adam and Eve, under the shadow of the forbidden tree in Eden, surrounded by their animal associates; congratulating them on this Godlike eternity of theirs, this immortality, or deathlessness, which, in its utmost essence, no sentence of justice should ever dissolve. I fancy that while they would have been sorely puzzled by the glorious flights of their distinguished descendant, there would have been at least one delighted auditor of the discourse—and that is the Old Serpent—who would have chimed in at once, at every climax, with a confirmation of the promise that they 'should not surely die,' since God knew well that in the day in which they ate of the fruit 'their eyes would be opened,' and they would become divine in a double sense, being Godlike already in an eternal nature, and Godlike afterwards in an added power of understanding and contradicting the hollow threats of the tyrannical Divinity. But even after hearing the lecture, it would still have remained for the transgressors to be expelled from 'the Tree of Life.' 'Now lest he put forth his hand and take of the tree of life, *and eat and live for ever*—so He drove out the man,' saying, 'Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.' This may be perhaps consistent with all that the lecturer tells us of Adam's constitution, but, at least, on the surface, it is more confirmatory of the belief of those who say that man was not created, either in body or soul, possessed of indefeasible immortality."

He then vindicates himself against the charge of teaching that man is no better than the beasts, and in closing the letter cites, with perfect assent, a passage from Dr. Dale's speech at Hawley Road Chapel, in which he dealt with this "hideous misrepresentation."



The second letter relates to the question, whether there are moral differences in men corresponding with the doctrine of an eternal distinction in their destinies. Recognizing the service rendered by Mr. Brown in bringing out the stupendous nature of the supposed change in those who pass out of death into life eternal, Mr. White goes on to say:—

"Hard, and cold, and callous as he seems to think us, I can only say that in my own case his lectures have revived, in their most overpowering influences, all the awful hours of long-past thought on human destiny, with which for so many years, by night and day, I have been visited, until faith, as it seemed to grow more solid, only threw a darker shade around me; for, indeed, the first effect of deeper believing is to create a profounder scepticism, arising from the very infinitude which opens before the eye that gazes firmly on eternity. Too vivid conceptions of eternal things are not desirable in the spiritual life of mankind. Yes, it may well be said to us: Do you indeed believe that regenerate man passes into endless being, or that true faith carries with it a destiny so different from that of common men, as you would assign to it? Who, that reflects on the community of the human race in all its conditions of temporal existence, on its common origin, on its physical, intellectual, and moral unity, on the historical, and ancestral, and social causes which determine so much that we call character, on the many excellences of the bad, and on the manifold imperfections of the good—can fail to stumble at first at a doctrine which places the seal of indestructibility on the foreheads of some, and relegates the rest of mankind, with all their virtues, struggles, and woes, to the realms of the perishable, and the doom of irremediable destruction?

"I know of no authority but One sufficiently commanding to compel me to this conclusion, and even that one leaves me still staggering under the weight which it lays

upon me ; leaves me still applying myself to maintain its revelations against contradiction with a mind 'astonied,' like Daniel's when he looked upon the glories and terrors of the invisible realms. Who, indeed, is sufficient for these things ? 'For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish ; to the one we are the savour of death unto death ; and to the other the savour of life unto life.' These, however, I say to myself, were the words of one who 'wept' and 'trembled' as he taught, and staggered sometimes as we do, yet believed in the teaching of the Spirit, and persisted in his faith that nothing less than *death* and *life everlasting* depended on the issues of man's probation here. But they were also the words of one who had not thrown off the burden of faith by a desperate rush into theories which, if they help a man to imagine himself 'sufficient' to grapple with the facts of life and of destiny, relieve only for a moment, by an artificial light not kindled at 'the fountain itself of heavenly radiance,' and that soon dies out, leaving the darkness deeper than before."

He then points out the Scripture authority for the belief in the distinction, a distinction which is not natural, but is dependent upon the use made by each human being of his power of choice, and shows that Mr. Brown's difference is with the Bible. He further suggests that the "failure to discern the infinite difference in character between good and evil men arises not from the obscurity of the phenomena, but from the vast extent of a superficial and deceptive profession of religion, or from the spiritual blindness of the observer." With regard to the effects on character of the reception of this doctrine, which Mr. Brown had stigmatized as "degrading" and "brutalizing," Mr. White states the result of his own experience, and quotes the recent declaration of Professor Barrett, of Dublin, published in the *Christian World*, to the effect that not a few men of scientific culture have been saved from gross materialism

and atheism, as the result of hearing Christ preached thus as the Messenger of Eternal Life.

The third letter is on the doctrine of the future punishment of impenitent sinners by destruction. At the outset the reader is reminded, that—

"This doctrine on future retribution is but a segment of the wider doctrine on Life in Christ only (though often mistaken for the whole of it), and it is necessary to repeat that that wider doctrine is supported by several lines of evidence wholly distinct from the Scripture teaching on punishment. That this teaching agrees with the otherwise established truth of Conditional Immortality is, however, naturally regarded by us as a decisive argument in confirmation of it; and it is no small indication of its validity that it delivers us at once from the incredible horrors of the Augustinian theology, and from the ruinous mental and moral entanglements of Universalism."

Mr. White then quotes some of the objections raised against the doctrine from the two opposite sides, and writes:—

"The maintainers of this doctrine of future retribution are subjected to two strangely contradictory attacks. Here we have men of the highest capacity objecting to it on account of its incredible terribleness; and perhaps the next able objector will dismiss it, without further examination, because it 'takes away all fear of future punishment from before the minds of mankind.' The garbled indictment varies. Sometimes the doctrine is to be set aside because it is too terrible to be true that God should 'annihilate' a sinner after 'untold ages of torment'; and sometimes it is a removal of all the sanctions of moral government, because no one will be afraid of being raised from the dead 'only just to be reduced to nothingness again.'

"It is impossible to follow in these letters all the windings of an opposition which seems to think almost

any weapon sanctified by the use to which it is turned, in assailing a doctrine so heartily disliked all round, and which indeed proved critical to many in causing the rejection of Christ when on earth. It was when He had taught distinctly in the great synagogue at Capernaum that men had not 'life in themselves,' that salvation meant 'living for ever,' and that living for ever means 'not dying' in the plainest sense of the terms, and that this living for ever depended on the closest spiritual union with Him—that 'many went back and walked no more with Him' (John vi. 26-66)."

In his own vindication he declares that :—

"What has been taught by us on this subject has been so taught simply and altogether in the fear of God, as the result of what we think to be honest interpretation of the *records of Revelation*. Not one word have I to say on the ground of reason, natural philosophy, or natural religion as to the results of human probation in a future state, before consulting Scripture. 'Surely' (in the striking words of Mr. Thomas Walker, late editor of the *Daily News*, in a letter with which he recently favoured me) 'when the destiny of mankind is concerned, we cannot rest in the conclusions of speculative philosophy—too often the dictates of human pride—nor trust to the fancied results of psychological or historical analysis. We must have the assurances of our Father in heaven, which as men of faith we will accept. Far from us the disposition to prescribe to the divine Teacher, or to distinguish what He will find us ready to believe, *and that which we have resolved beforehand to reject*. Surely it must be the highest wisdom, humbly, thankfully, and unhesitatingly, to believe in the Son of God, who died to save us, when He speaks of the awful problems of human destiny.' Not one word, then, have we to say in defence of the doctrine of the resurrection of the wicked, and their destruction in the fire of God's wrath, unless these awful prospects are



matters of divine revelation which lie open to every eye." He challenges his opponents to prove, and not simply assert that the whole Bible ought to be read in the light of the assumed natural eternity of the soul of man. He declares his own conviction that the statements denounced as monstrous and incredible, "*are precisely those which Christ, the Son of God, has affirmed*, which His apostles, Matthew, John, Peter, and Paul have repeated . . . namely, that the wicked shall be 'raised from the dead,' shall 'stand before God,' shall be 'judged according to their works,' shall be 'cast into everlasting fire,' and in that fire shall 'pay the penalty of everlasting destruction' (2 Thess. i.). Set aside those words of the messengers of God, and we have no further argument to offer to revolted Christendom. But so long as these stand unblotted from the New Testament, they who rest their faith on them will not cease to warn men to close their ears against the siren song of hypothetical Universalism, which must be luring men to their eternal ruin."

In this third letter is a paragraph on the spiritual source of the doctrine of universal salvation which is too important to be omitted:—

"In reply to many fallacious consolations offered to impenitence, I must profess my persuasion that much of the religious teaching of the last few years has proceeded from a gradually-declining sense of sin in its evil, and in its deserts; as that again has proceeded from a declining sense of the justice of God. This is but to repeat the lesson of all history, that ages of great external civilization, and of physical luxury and comfort, have ever been ages of epicurean theologizing. Amidst plenty of corn and wine, amidst the illusions of art and beauty, men lose the sense of 'the sinfulness of sin,' of the righteousness and severity of God, and of the terribleness of the world of doom beyond. So is it to-day. 'Men heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.' They will 'not endure

sound doctrine.' Hell itself must become a school of glory; heaven the final refuge of a world of unfortunates, who really had almost every excuse for their villainies and crimes. Between the fall of Adam, and the force of circumstances, and the cheapness of vicious indulgences, and the bias of heredity, and the difficulty of knowing whom to believe—Jesus or Mohammed, Paul or Rousseau, John or Voltaire—a hopeful case must be made out for every man; and if God Himself should 'judge the world in righteousness,' He must unsay all the ancient threats of exclusion from future blessedness; and, after some fatherly chastisement of 'dogs, and sorcerers, and whore-mongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and lovers and makers of lies,' must receive them with open arms to paradise. This is certainly the tone of much of the most fashionable preaching of our time, both in and out of the National Church. If I stood alone in this generation (instead of re-echoing the judgement of myriads of the wisest and holiest men) I must till death continue to raise an outcry of alarm to my fellow-sinners against this sure sign of an approaching deluge. Never has this tone taken possession of the Church, but some dread era of judgement has vindicated the reality of the government of Him 'whose feet are like fine brass burning in a furnace.' Oh, for the awful voice of some Savonarola to thunder over the heads of the ungodly millions of Europe, and awaken them to the realities of judgement to come; to turn their attention away from the 'prophets who prophesy smooth things' to the true sayings of God. 'The judge standeth before the door,' and here are the very signs of His approach—men saying, Peace and safety!—all right, and all for the best, in both worlds—when 'sudden destruction is coming, and *there shall be no remedy.*'"

The fourth letter is devoted to a consideration of the alleged tendency of the doctrine of Life in Christ to encourage materialistic atheism. Mr. White shows how

this doctrine may meet materialism on its own ground, and enable its professors to believe in God, and in a Gospel of salvation. He says :—

"The apostles evidently went forth with a Message which could save without delay Epicurean Materialists and Sadducees, without insisting first on a psychological conversion to faith in man's natural immortality and possession of a 'never-dying soul.' This is precisely our position. We who hold this doctrine are not necessarily materialists. I myself am not one, but am strenuously opposed to that form of opinion. But the 'Gospel which we preach' is adapted to meet, on their own grounds—'just as they are'—materialists of every grade and type, with a moral certainty of a glorious result as to multitudes of them."

He then points out the distinction between different classes of materialists, and maintains that some of them are true Christian believers, who apart from Christianity would have no hope of a future life. After an admission of the danger to society of a perfectly logical materialism, he puts the question : But how may it best be encountered and overcome ?

"The answer is, *not* by any simply metaphysical or philosophical process—*not* by a psychology which may be riddled by the objections of Mr. Herbert Spencer, or made to look doubtful even by Mr. Holyoake. It cannot be checked even by lectures on the immortality of the soul, nor even by the additional bribe to faith of a promise of universal discipline and salvation. No ; the true remedy for a *debasing* materialism (for I will not admit that Milton's materialism was debasing) is to be found in the moral rather than in the intellectual realms of thought. It will be found, not in a contrary theory as to the substratum of mind, or as to the eternity of the thinking power, but in the preaching of a credible judgement to come, and of the grace of God in the salvation purchased

by Christ. If you wish to overcome the evil types of atheistic materialism, you must awaken conscience rather than entangle the intellect in doubtful disputations.

“But this is not the complete answer. Christ is in every sense the Light of the world. His special message is not that of Terror, but of Mercy. Proclaim that mercy. Preach the Gospel to every creature. Bring near, with a heart that feels it, the love of God to sinners. Set before them Christ ‘openly crucified for them,’ ‘bearing their offences, carrying their sorrows’; declare to the penitent the remission of their sins—and you will wield against the bad sorts of materialism the most powerful weapon in the world.”

In 1878 Mr. White was a good deal occupied with the case of the Rev. W. Impey, General Superintendent of Wesleyan Missions in South-Eastern Africa, who, on the ground of his agreement with Mr. White’s mode of presenting the Gospel, was required, in the spring of that year, to resign his position.

At a valedictory meeting on his return to South Africa as a private worker, held in Hawley Road Chapel on August 10, 1878, Mr. Impey gave some account of the Wesleyan Missions in Africa, and of the circumstances under which his forty years’ connection with them had been brought to an end. Mr. White then gave an address to Mr. Impey, thanking him for the information he had just given, and explaining that this manifestation of sympathy did not mean any blame or reflection upon those honoured brethren by whose decision this separation had been caused, for under their rules they had no option. He then proceeded: “But there were some of us onlookers who had met with and learned to love and honour you with an affection that increased with every advance in knowledge, who said, ‘This must not be. This man shall not return to Africa without the utterance of at least a few English voices lifted up in blessing and sympathy.’ I



look upon it as certain that instead of deserving to return in silence and shame to the Cape Colony, we ought to 'accompany you to the ship' with hymns of praise to God who has strengthened you to deliver a momentous testimony. It is not for some trifle in dogma or discipline that you have incurred the penalty of deprivation. It is for the greatest of all ends that you have made this sorrowful homeward voyage, and incurred this deposition from your eminent position. It is as a witness to the just and merciful character of the living God. It has been in order to aid the settlement of the question, 'What is the character of the Deity who shall be made known to the heathen world by the Christian nations?' . . . You have made a movement towards earnest thought on this question, and this has separated you from your English friends. But it will bring you nearer to the heathen—of whom it is said, 'the Lord loveth the stranger.' It will bring you much nearer to the heathen who are seeking after God. . . . Your witness is of priceless value. It will gradually become known. It will kindle many a youthful Methodist to earnest protest and similar sacrifice. It will travel through the whole missionary world. A missionary of forty years' standing, and sixty years of age, does not speak lightly on questions like this. A single voice speaking the words of reason and of Scripture, and speaking from the depths of an all-sacrificing conviction, is stronger than any sanhedrin attempting to stifle your testimony by silence, or to answer you by a reference to antiquated standards. I augur the best results from your own sorrow. . . . You have done much to represent as realities both judgement to come, and the life everlasting, and to make the divine love intelligible to men. We therefore bid you farewell in the peace of God. God bless you and the noble companion of your toils. Though you may no more preach in the churches which you have built, your voice and your thoughts will reach farther than you at present

believe, and your deep affliction will tend more than your past forty years' labours to the eventual triumph of the truth."

After attending the Mildmay Conference in the early part of 1879, Mr. White sent a letter to the *Christian*, insertion of which was at first refused, but, on his remonstrance with the editor, it was allowed to appear in the issue of April 10th.

#### "LITERAL INTERPRETATION.

"SIR,—At the first meeting of the recent Mildmay Conference, which I was glad to attend, Dr. Horatius Bonar used the following weighty words—'I feel a greater certainty than ever as to the literal interpretation of the whole Word of God—historical, doctrinal, prophetic. "Literal, if possible," is, I believe, the only maxim that will carry you right through the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation.'

"Your columns are not the place for any long discussion on the principles of interpretation, much less on any special doctrine; but, in view of certain terribly severe observations by Dr. Mackay, of Hull, on the 'Sadduceeism and infidelity' of some amongst us who, earnestly retaining our evangelical faith, have yet been led to unpopular conclusions on the Scripture doctrine of immortality by the application of Dr. Bonar's own maxim of exegesis, I should like to ask either of these honoured brethren (and I do it in all good faith) to be kind enough to tell us whether they are in possession of any secondary maxim, defining the 'possible,' and limiting the application of the general principle.

"For my part, I desire to bow implicitly to the authority of Holy Scripture soundly interpreted. I hold that the maxim of Dr. Bonar is the right canon of interpretation—on all subjects—and that the literal, or obvious, sense of

the main current of Scripture testimony is the ruling sense, which must govern the explanation of all single 'texts.' In accordance with this rule, I joyfully believe in all the usually accepted evangelical doctrines, and also in the premillennial advent of Christ, and the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. The same rule applied to the ordinary language of Scripture on the nature of man, on the object of redemption, and on the destiny of saints and sinners, leads me, at present, to conclusions which Dr. Mackay denounces as of the nature of infidelity. Kindly and patiently explain to us the secondary maxim by which in this case Dr. Bonar's general canon is to be limited; and if we find it appealing to our conscience before God, I, for one, will at once recant, and adopt again the beliefs of Dr. Mackay on eschatology, and the object of the incarnation of the 'Life.'

"Yours faithfully,

"EDWARD WHITE."

In the autumn of 1879 under an arrangement made by Mr. Samuel Smith (subsequently M.P.) and Mr. White, the Rev. W. A. Hobbs, a former missionary in Bengal, who some years previously had retired, partly on account of ill-health, and partly because his acceptance of Mr. White's teaching made his position almost untenable, went to Calcutta in order to resume mission work on the basis of the doctrine of Life in Christ. He continued that work with considerable success during more than four years, sending reports to Mr. White from time to time, which were also read with interest by Mr. Smith. Further details as to this mission will be found in Appendix C.

The bearing of the doctrine of Life in Christ upon Calvinism, was a subject treated occasionally by Mr. White. In March 1881 a long letter from him on that subject was printed in the *Christian World*, wherein he said :—

“With respect to the bearings of this doctrine of immortality on Calvinism, I need not say that Calvinism has, and always has had, a strong hold on the convictions of a large section of Bible readers. There is a philosophy and exegesis of Calvinism which have, in every age, carried the conviction of multitudes of learned men, as its tone of God-honouring piety has carried the adhesion of multitudes of unlearned Christians. . . . But a belief in the eternal predestination to salvation of a certain number of mankind, even when unaccompanied by Calvin’s doctrine of personal predestination to eternal damnation, has always been heavily weighted by the notion of the everlasting misery of the non-elect. It is not wonderful that Calvinists all over the world, who are ‘principled’ in their main theory, are breaking loose from some of their fetters, so far as to embrace widely a doctrine which enables them to believe in predestination to life, apart from the shocking doctrine on the results of non-election. Calvinism, held under the hypothesis of Augustine, that all men are naturally immortal, leads to immoral and maddening views of the divine character. . . . Now this immoral conscience-killing element in Calvinism is cleared away for the mind which embraces as Scriptural the doctrine that immortal life is the privilege of the elect alone. No injustice is imputed to God when it is thought that out of a race, mortal through sin, and having no just claim on Him for an unending life in bliss, He bestows this blissful life only on some, and judges equitably the remainder. . . . Practically, I have found, during a ministry of thirty years in London in the same place, that certainty and nearness and credibility, in the prospect of judgement to come, operate at least as effectually as the old infinite threatenings, which produce more unbelief than they vanquish, while they also hinder the direct action on thoughtful minds of that merciful message which, after all, carries with it the main energy of the Gospel in bringing men back to God.”



In a similar strain he wrote to Dr. Gloag in Scotland in 1888: "I note what you say on Calvinism. Under the theory of Life in Christ only, people may retain their Calvinism without any moral shock, since God *owes* eternal life to no one, and may give it as and when He pleases; and no one under this view has to be shocked by the prospect of endless torments for the non-elect. But supposing one believes in the possibility of the obedience of faith for all, whether here or in Hades, as it is open to believe under my way of thinking, then the question is whether or not *all* who hear the Gospel have not, with the Spirit's inwork, power to believe and be saved. As to the ungodly not having 'spiritual life' and thereby power to take hold of God, I may astonish you when I say that I wholly reject the notion that what is called 'spiritual life' is so denominated in Scripture. But you will recollect that I have Cremer's N. T. Lexicon on my side. He utterly rejects the phrase 'spiritual death' as being of divine authority. If you will look under *θάνατος* and *νεκρός* you will see what he says. He affirms that these are all phrases proleptically used to denote souls under *sentence of death* and certain to die in hell; and so I hold that 'living in the spirit' means having eternal life, not having holiness, but life; and further I hold that every human soul, on hearing of the divine mercy and worked on by the all-loving God, has power to believe and repent, and thereby to enter into eternal life. (See Rom. viii. 1-14.) The 'life' of the Ephesians (ii. 1-12) was one to which they had been raised *along with Christ*; and *He* was never raised out of sin to holiness, but out of death to life eternal. There is nothing in Farrar's argument for future *opportunities* of salvation for ignorant souls which cannot be held under the general theory of *Life in Christ*; as any one may see who will read that book, an exercise which few of the saints ever submitted to, though it was a work of my best thirty years."

In a later letter he wrote: "I think the difference between us is the result of method. You write as if my chief interest were in the question of penalty. All along it has lain in the question of immortality. If I thought Revelation proceeded on the basis of man's inherent immortality, for the whole race, I should be driven to Universalism, more or less pronounced, as you are. But my central interest has always been in the Incarnation, and in connection with the *gift* of immortal life; and since I cannot see any reason why it should be thought that God *owes* that gift to all alike, I feel no difficulty in taking Scripture language literally and concluding that it is reserved for the 'elect,' and denied to the non-elect, who will suffer 'everlasting ὄλεθρος' from the presence of the *Omni*present Being. Of course I distinguish between universal *survival* of souls and universal *immortality*. Nature is full of survivals which are not eternal survivals, and I believe all souls survive, some for evangelization, some for punishment, but not all for endless life."

As an illustration of a still persistent misconception of Mr. White's position and of the great difficulty of inducing an opponent to recognize the true point of an argument, may be here introduced an extract from a private letter received by Mr. White in December 1883 respecting a third party, and Mr. White's reply. His correspondent wrote: "—— was a good worker, and I highly esteemed him, even when he went off into your errors, and thought that life meant existence and death annihilation. Receive my hearty wishes for your long life, not in the base sense of existence. Ah me! what a word life is! So be it given abundantly, even as you now possess it."

To this Mr. White replied: "Let this one word sink down into your ears. I have never said or written anything so foolish as that *life* means *existence* only. What we have said is that, whatever else it signifies, it does not

lose its proper meaning of continuing alive, of conscious existence ; and that whatever else the threat of death and destruction may signify, it does not lose its primary meaning of *cessation of life*, of existence as well as of blessedness."

## CHAPTER XII

### MERCHANTS' LECTURER

1880-1882 ; AGE 60-63

**I**N February of the year 1880 Mr. White received the first copies of the French edition of *Life in Christ*, its French title being *L'Immortalité Conditionnelle ou la Vie en Christ*. The influence of that book on the Continent is indicated in Appendix C.

In March, feeling the need for more fresh air and mental rest than was possible while he remained in London, Mr. White spent the insides of two consecutive weeks in Kent, chiefly at Ramsgate, but made a roundabout journey through some of the picturesque towns and villages of the county before reaching that town.

At this time the General Election was going on which turned out the Tory Government, and once more put Mr. Gladstone at the head of affairs. In all these proceedings Mr. White took a deep interest, not merely on public grounds, hoping to see the result that actually was attained, but also for family reasons, more than one of his near connections being candidates for the House of Commons.

On April 7th he heard Renan, the famous French writer and critic, give a lecture at Langham Hall on "Religions." He was not favourably impressed with the Frenchman's personality, nor with his argumentation, which he called an "attempt to smother the positive facts and doctrines



of Christianity in a vast tide of imposing generalizations as to the tendency of humanity. No single outburst of prophetic zeal for righteousness."

At an "At Home," held at Grosvenor House on July 6th, to which Mr. White was invited, he was greatly pleased to meet Robert Browning, whom he had known in his early days at York Street Chapel, but had not previously met since they had both grown to manhood.

In the same month of July 1880 he was chosen one of the Merchants' Lecturers, to fill the place of Dr. Raleigh. These "Merchants' Lectures" are delivered each week on Tuesdays, at 12 o'clock. There are six lecturers, who take turns of a month each, so that each takes two turns in the year. At this time they were delivered at the old Weigh House Chapel on Fish Street Hill; when that building was taken over by the railway they were removed to Finsbury Chapel, and afterwards to the Memorial Hall. Mr. White's first turn came in October, when he took for his subject: "Certainty in Religion," and the four lectures were published in book form in December.<sup>1</sup> Writing some little time later to Mr. Knight, he added a postscript, saying: "Just got a letter from the Duke of Argyll crying up *Certainty*, which he bought from seeing the leading article on it in Saturday week's *Spectator*." Mr. White continued to take his share of this work after his retirement from the pastorate, until the year 1893, when the state of his health induced him to resign it. Of his discourses on these occasions many others have been published, some in the weekly Press, some also in more permanent form.

Among those published in book form were those of his last series, which were delivered in May 1893, and related to modern spirit manifestations. Having no doubt of the reality of many of these, notwithstanding the existence of much trickery, he was fully convinced that they were

<sup>1</sup> Elliot Stock, 62, Paternoster Row.

unlawful and wicked. The publication was entitled, *Modern Spiritualism judged in the light of Divine Revelation*.<sup>1</sup>

In response to a requisition, signed by men of great weight and influence, which stated that "almost the whole of intelligent modern infidelity rests on the assumption that the proved conclusions of modern science are hopelessly at variance with the fundamental doctrines both of natural and of revealed religion," which assumption was believed not to be warranted by the facts, the Archbishop of Canterbury convened a private Conference, at Lambeth Palace, of men of science who were not in agreement with that assumption. To this Conference Edward White was invited and went on January 7, 1881. There he found himself in company with such men as Professors Sir G. G. Stokes, Balfour Stewart, T. G. Bonney, Dallinger, and Henslow; Sir James Paget, Rev. J. M. Wilson, &c. The general sense of the meeting seemed to be that the chief need was for the confession of their faith by a few of the scientific believers whose names would carry the greatest weight, rather than books of essays, or organizations which would lead to antagonism. The upshot was the appointment of a small committee, with secretary, to keep up communication with men of science who are believers.

At this time Mr. White occasionally preached to the paupers at the St. Pancras Workhouse. His sense of humour found expression sometimes even there in his choice of texts for his sermons, as well as in his mode of dealing with them. For example, one of his texts, particularly appropriate to such an audience, was: "As having nothing, yet possessing all things."

On a journey to Bournemouth (April 6th) he was detained for an hour at Basingstoke by an accident to a wagon. The purpose of the journey was to speak at a

<sup>1</sup> Elliot Stock, 62, Paternoster Row, and James Clarke & Co., 13, Fleet Street.

meeting of the Liberation Society at Bournemouth. The notes of this speech indicate clearly, as did so many of his utterances, that the reason why he was willing to aid in the movement for the disestablishment of the Anglican Church, was simply his zeal for righteousness, and not at all hostility to that Church, which he firmly believed would be benefitted, so far as it is a spiritual organization, by being liberated from State bonds. It was in the hope of a reformation of Nonconformity, as well as of the Church of England, that he longed for disestablishment ; in hope of a reconstitution of English Protestantism, the abolition of existing sects, which should all be merged into one Protestant Church in each town or neighbourhood, the ideal independency which he never tired of commending to the attention of Christians. And he said : " Our business is not to succeed, but to protest ; to teach and enforce right principles, and to accept instalments when we cannot obtain a complete repentance."

He was always very impartial in the distribution of censure on the systems of Dissenters as well as the Anglican system ; and in this speech he did not spare. While advocating Disestablishment as right in principle, he still dreaded some of its probable effects. On that subject he wrote as late as 1895 : " In politics the best is often the enemy of the good. Disestablishment is right in the abstract, but the *status quo* is a less evil to endure than would be the furious and mischievous revenge of all the 'craftsmen of Diana,' whose trade would be injured by its success. There was no such revenge in Ireland, because the majority of Irish were Catholics. But in England the majority, and the most powerful classes, would revenge disestablishment of the Church whereby they have their living, and their supremacy."

On the 29th April, 1881, Edward Miall died, and on the 5th May he was buried. On the following Sunday evening Mr. White preached a memorial sermon, in which he

showed how completely he had overcome his early prejudice against both the man and the work to which he had for so many years consecrated his time, his talents, and his energy. In the course of the sermon, he spoke of Mr. Miall as one of our best and noblest politicians ; and of the work of his life as having been truly spiritual, entirely governed and dictated by faith derived from Heaven. Holding that a man's life could best be characterized and estimated by the ideas to the promotion of which it was chiefly devoted, he applied this test to Mr. Miall's life. That had been given up for many years to the extension and propagation of one of the most important ideas that could occupy the minds of Christian people as lovers of liberty, viz., the necessity for the separation of Church from State. First, for the purpose of vindicating divine truth and doing justice to Christianity ; and secondly, for the purpose of rendering justice to all ranks and orders of men. Such a separation was absolutely necessary, because of the fundamental distinction between the law and the Gospel, because the one was based, like the Mosaic dispensation, on justice and on force used for its advancement, while the other was based on grace, with the object of saving sinners. He then sketched the outlines of the story of the incongruous union between the two systems, which came to pass after three centuries of separate action, and has continued more or less ever since, to the detriment of both. It was in the struggle for freedom, as between Church and State, that the honoured life of Edward Miall was spent. No man had done more in this generation than he, no man had done so much as he, to teach the necessity for this separation to the men of his age ; no man had suffered more in this cause, no man had endured more of every kind of infamous contumely, or had with such Christian temper manifested its infinite importance. To those who say that the great institution, of which Mr. Miall was the founder and the mainspring, has not yet



borne its fruit, the answer is that already it has changed the condition of England. Many of the Dissenters' grievances have been already swept away and we breathe a freer atmosphere, and these results are due, in great degree, to the influence and labours of Mr. Miall. But this was not his only work. How earnestly and how thoroughly he worked for all good objects was illustrated by the part that he took in a Conference held at the London Coffee House in 1867, as narrated in Chapter VI. There was reason, said Mr. White, for believing that the speeches at that meeting, on both sides, were not lost, but that by them a new interest was created among large numbers of the hand-workers of the factories—men frequently among the hardest headed in the country—in the subject of the Christian revelation; and much of the success of that Conference was certainly due to the wise counsels and conciliatory temper of Mr. Miall. His work was now done, but its influence would remain.

Only three days later came the public meeting of the Liberation Society at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, at which Mr. White was one of the speakers. In supporting a resolution which indicated that all the endeavours of the Church of England to reform itself would be ineffectual while it continued to be established by law, he dealt chiefly with the question of the purchase and sale of ecclesiastical benefices. He gave an account of the facts as revealed in the report of a Royal Commission of Inquiry appointed in 1879. Of the livings or benefices in England, about 13,000 in all, he said there were 6,000 in the gift of public bodies, and these were unsaleable, but the other 7,000, which are private property, might be sold by the owner like any doctor's practice. He explained that it was possible for the proprietor of any of these to sell the next presentation only, retaining the right to all subsequent presentations; or the proprietor might sell the advowson, that is the right to appoint

the rectors of the parish for ever and ever. He went on to show how the oath, or declaration, against simony is evaded under cover of certain legal decisions. It was impossible to do away with the sale of advowsons except under the conditions of disestablishment, and *that* the clergy were not yet willing to accept. He did not wish needlessly to decry the character of the clergy of the Church of England, for he knew them too well not to honour and love very many of them. At all events he himself had clean hands, for in early life he had abandoned an inheritance, which he supposed would now have been of the value of eight or ten deaneries, in order to addict himself to the ministry of the Gospel. He could not subscribe to everything in the Book of Common Prayer, and in consequence had been consigned to forty years outside the Church of England, and to obscure labour in the back streets of London; but he would undergo another forty years of separation from the privileged position of an English clergyman, rather than soil his hand with that scandalous system of traffic in livings, which was the very foundation of the system for distributing pastors to the English nation. And for this system, as he had pointed out at the beginning of his speech, the whole nation is responsible so long as the Church remains established.

It was on the day after he had delivered this speech that he wrote to a lady, who had sent him a little present, a characteristically playful letter, in which he said:—

“The smelling-bottle I took with me to the Tabernacle, where I had to address 5,000 people last night in a speech on ‘Purchase in the Church!’ and was horribly frightened at having to do so. But a sniff of that ammonia quite inspired me, and I felt equal to anything after it. It is a sort of bottled courage and philosophy.”

On May 17th the Revised Version of the New Testament was published. Mr. White purchased a copy in

Paternoster Row at 8.30 a.m., and having to deliver the Merchants' Lecture that day at noon, he read from this Revised Version, being thus almost certainly the first to use it for reading in a public service.

At the end of May he had a very pleasant visit to Cambridge, meeting there a number of interesting persons and preaching at Emmanuel Church on the 29th.

In June he went to Bradford, and lectured at the Mechanics' Institute on "The Churches and Outsiders." He then went on to Newcastle-on-Tyne, where he prepared and preached a sermon on Psalm cxxi.: "My help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth," the occasion being the celebration of the birth of George Stephenson. He showed that man, by his discoveries and inventions, only reaches to, and makes use of, the energies of God.

The death of Dean Stanley, on July 19th, meant to Mr. White the loss of a valued friend. The Dean had given him, in 1866, a card of perpetual admission to Westminster Abbey, of which he had made such good use that he had gained that thorough knowledge of the Abbey which has already been indicated. The Dean's funeral took place in the Abbey on July 25th, and Mr. White, who had been preaching at Lowestoft on the 24th, came up to town in order to attend it. He remarked that the Abbey was full of notabilities, and said that the attraction to this funeral was the combination of sweetness and light; not faith in truth, but affection for a man who was exceedingly courageous and honest, according to his perceptions. Dean Stanley was illustrating the "Beatitudes" from the people buried in the Abbey, immediately before his death.

Later in the year Mr. White gave a lecture on the subject, in which he showed the need there was to distinguish between the personal character and the theological ideas of the late Dean, who, as he said, had long

been regarded by the extreme Broad Church party as their very flower and crown. He said :—

“Our dear friend carried his desire for comprehension much too far. He lived, perhaps, a life too innocent and protected to have any effective knowledge of, or sympathy with, the deep emotions of great sinners, or with the Gospel of redemption which they need. . . . He much resembled Apollos before his illumination by Aquila and Priscilla: a man eloquent and learned and fervent in spirit, and conversant with all the brilliant lore of Europe and Asia and Africa, but ‘knowing only the baptism of John,’ and not sufficiently dwelling even on the keynote of John’s ministry.” Of the newer Broad Church Christianity Mr. White spoke as “a Christianity without backbone or skeleton, a fluid, molluscos mass of sentimental theism, professing unity with all other theistic religions, but producing none of the effects of genuine Christianity, producing no conversions, eliciting no contempt of the cross from ungodly men, notable chiefly for its steady denunciation of dogma, and exaltation of charity. . . . And the dear Dean of Westminster, with his universal drag-net of comprehension, must not be quoted in order to stop the mouths of Christ and His apostles, whose words are quite distinct that ungodly and wicked men ‘shall not inherit the kingdom of God,’ but shall be punished with ‘everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.’”

At this time Mr. White’s new house, which he called “Hilda’s Mount” at Highwood Hill, near Mill Hill, was in course of erection, and he watched its progress, and the preparation of the surrounding garden, with much pleasure, going there as frequently as he could find opportunity and delighting greatly in the pure air and pleasant scenery. It was not, however, ready for occupation until the following year, when it was partially furnished, and then sup-



plied a welcome retreat from the noise and bustle of London life, of which he was glad to avail himself as often as opportunity served. After his retirement it became his home for the remainder of his life.

The autumn holiday this year, 1881, was spent at Whitby, from August 9th to the end of that month. While there Mr. White took great interest in the ruins and in the history of the ancient Abbey. He was, indeed, so interested in the story, that he made it the subject of a lecture delivered at the West Cliff Congregational Church on August 28th, in celebration of the 110th anniversary of that Church. He mentioned that in the preceding week there had been the anniversary of the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre of the Huguenots, and the ejection of the two thousand nonconforming ministers from the Church of England, and the 1,200th anniversary of the death of the Princess Hilda, the founder of the original Abbey in the year 658. He then described the state of England at that time, and the blessing that such an institution became to the neighbourhood and to the country, having been a school of medicine and a place of healing, of worship, of learning, of teaching, not only of religion, but also of the useful and fine arts, and of the copying of books. Boys and girls were there educated, and preachers went forth from thence into the surrounding region, which at that time was almost entirely heathen. That foundation lasted for two hundred years, and then it was destroyed by the heathen Danes who invaded the land, and it was not until the time of William the Conqueror that the imposing structure now in ruin was built by the Percys. The character and influence of this new monastery were not nearly so beneficial as had been those of the former one, and it was suppressed in the reign of Henry VIII. Mr. White's aim in this discourse was stated at the outset to be to remind the Independents of Whitby of a few facts and principles which might help them to feel and to assert

their unity with all that is good in the past, so as to repel the exclusive claim of Rome to St. Hilda, and to establish the truth that Independency, rightly understood, is Catholic and Apostolic Christianity; ardently acknowledging all that is spiritually good and Christlike, yesterday and to-day, at Rome, in Whitby, and all over the world. In summing up at the close, he spoke of the many interesting historic churches and other ecclesiastical buildings which he had visited, and then said:—

“And yet I turn to this modest sanctuary with an undoubting faith that if we can but be earnest Christians, worthy of these principles [*i.e.*, of the true Independency], by the grace of God, not Hilda’s Abbey, not Columba’s cells, not the great fabric of Canterbury, nor even the marvellous Church of St. Paul at Rome beyond the gates, near by where that apostle died for Jesus Christ, so well represents original Christianity as does this Church of believers, consecrated to simplicity of ritual, to apostolic doctrine, and to brotherly communion.”

This lecture was very soon afterwards printed at Whitby as a small pamphlet. In acknowledging the receipt of a copy of it sent to him by Mr. White, Dr. Perowne, then Dean of Peterborough, wrote: “I don’t think there is a very serious difference between us. You are broad and catholic enough to find links of brotherly love with all who profess and call themselves Christians. I only wish that in your body as in ours there were more of the like spirit, men who would look for the points of agreement more than for the points of difference.”

In this year Mr. Skrefsrud, a Norwegian missionary among the Santhals, an aboriginal tribe dwelling in the hills of Northern Bengal, was in England for the second time, his previous visit having been in 1874. He is a wonderful linguist, and has done a great work among the Santhals. On December 11th he occupied the pulpit at Hawley Road Chapel, and of his testimony Mr. White thus wrote:—

"We had a wonderful day of his preaching. In the evening the outpour resembled inspiration more than aught else : accent enough to remind you that he is a foreigner, but such an outflowing of truth and grace as moved the whole congregation with wonder and joy ; delivered in English without one grammatical mistake, though he has not spoken English except for a few days for seven years.

"Mr. Skrefsrud's report as to the spiritual effect of teaching truth on eternal life to the converted heathen included three principal particulars.

"1. Such teaching relieves them of the oppressive and unprofitable horror with which former teaching led them to regard the fate of their ancestors.

"2. It strongly corroborates the consciousness of the life-relation existing, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, between themselves and God—thus enabling them more vigorously and joyfully to retrieve lost ground, and to recover after stumblings ; and

"3. It greatly stimulates their zeal, (as well as that of the missionary), in the work of 'holding out the word of life,' as giving more vivid reality to the message, and more credibility."

In 1882, just after there had been a great outburst of Anti-Semitism in Europe, Mr. White devoted his Merchants' Lecture, on January 24th, to a recital of "The Sorrows and Glories of the Jewish People." After speaking of the marvellous vitality of the race, notwithstanding the persecution which it has endured, and the strange way in which it has held together as a race while scattered among all nations, he acknowledges our indebtedness to them for those precious books which they have conserved for the world, and which have had so much influence in keeping their own race together through all their wanderings. "What other books are like them?" he asks, and suggests the experiment of trying to deal with any classical book as we deal with the Bible, which he

foresees would speedily fail. He asserts that the whole Jewish people ought not to be charged with the guilt of the death of Jesus, and that their stubborn resistance to European Christianity has often been a noble resistance to idolatry and superstition. He looks forward to a time when the outrages from which they suffer shall cease, and the Christ shall come again to avenge Israel and end "the times of the Gentiles" by the restoration of the scattered nation to its old central position in a renovated world. In closing he pronounces an eloquent eulogy on the character of their ancestor Abraham, who was Jehovah's friend. Fifty Jews were in the audience, as Mr. White informed Dr. Petavel.

In March 1882 came the thirtieth anniversary of the opening of the Chapel. The two remarkable discourses by Mr. White, delivered on Sunday the 19th, giving a sketch of the history of English opinion on human destiny during the previous thirty years, were afterwards published as a pamphlet, with the title, *The Endless Life*. On the following Thursday a social meeting was held, at which a number of former members who were residing at a distance were present to cheer and congratulate the pastor, and presentation was made to him of a sum of money in addition to several artistic and useful articles.

On April 4th there was a meeting of the London Congregational Union, at which Mr. White was chosen Chairman for the year 1883.

Some of his friends had publicly suggested his name as that of one suitable for election as Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales for 1883. The choice had to be made at the meeting on May 8th. In anticipation of that meeting, having learnt that there were two other names that were likely to receive an equal number of votes, so that the first ballot would probably be indecisive, he wrote a letter, which appeared in the *Nonconformist and Independent* of May 5th, in which, after



explaining his position and stating some objections to the mode of election, he said: "Under these circumstances, not having been a voluntary candidate, but set forward without my own consent and contrary to my wish, . . . I have resolved to request, at the earliest moment after being made acquainted with the facts, most respectfully but most earnestly, all those gentlemen who had designed to vote for my election to abstain from their purpose, so as to reduce the process to the choice between two candidates only." This letter had the desired effect, and the election fell upon Dr. Fairbairn.

At a meeting of the Union held on the 12th at the Memorial Hall, he spoke on the "Moral Causes of Absence from Public Worship."

The autumnal meetings of the Union were held at Bristol. Mr. White was entertained at the house of an old friend who had known him at Cardiff forty years previously. Mr. White was one of the speakers at the great public meeting held in the Colston Hall on October 12th. He spoke of the Bible, always his most congenial subject, and of influences hostile to it. Of these he mentioned: (1) Ignorance of its contents; (2) Literary criticism without spiritual insight; (3) Science which has lost one of its eyes; and (4) Intolerant orthodoxy. On Sunday, the 15th, he preached at Redland Park Church, and the next day proceeded to Cardiff to revisit some of the scenes of his earliest ministry, and to give his lecture on "Number in Nature an Evidence of Creative Intelligence." The day following he went on to Swansea, the Mumbles, and Caswell Bay. In that region he stayed until the 21st, when he went to Llanelly, preaching there on the 22nd. On the Monday he was interested in seeing the various processes at the Tin Plate Works there, and on the Tuesday he returned home.

In the *Homiletic Magazine* during 1882, there was published a "Symposium," which ran from March to

November, on "The Scripture Doctrine of the Atonement." Among the contributors were men of such divergent views as Dr. Littledale, Mr. J. Page Hopps, Canon Farrar, and Edward White, whose contribution appeared in the November issue. The summing up of his paper in the last paragraph is as follows :—

"Under these views the At-one-ment is a deeper mystery than has been sometimes supposed in recent ages. It is the union of the spotless Word of God, the Life of the universe, with sinful and perishing humanity, by a self-emptying of which modern theology has taken too little account, thereby perplexing the whole doctrine of the Trinity. It is the re-assumption of humanity by the Eternal Word in the resurrection, under the law of a new creation. And lastly, it is the lifting up of sinful and dying man, through regeneration, justification, sanctification, and redemption of the body, into a oneness with the glorified Christ, which carries with it the gift of indestructible immortality in God. 'He that hath the Son hath the life, and he that hath not the Son hath not the life.' 'The world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.'"

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE HAWLEY ROAD PASTORATE

1883-1885 ; AGE 63-66

A PLEASANT variation from his pastoral and theological work was Mr. White's visit of three days to Lord and Lady Portsmouth at their country seat of Eggesford, in February 1883.

In March he went to Halifax, as the guest of Mr. Edward Crossley, at Bermside. Preaching on the Sunday in Halifax, he found that, by telephone, his words reached eight people at Bradford, Leeds, and Bermside, and were heard distinctly. He was much interested in visiting the Crossleys' carpet works, and also the Orphanage, to which he was taken by Mrs. Crossley.

He was the Merchants' Lecturer for the month of March, and so it fell to his lot to deliver the last lecture at the old Weigh House Chapel. The lecture was on "The Place of the Hebrew Doctrine of Good and Evil amidst the Philosophies and Religions of Ancient Asia," one of those subsequently published in book form with the title, *Genesis III., History not Fable*. This lecture was given on the 27th of March, 1883, and being the last in the old building there was a large congregation, including many ministers and laymen of all Churches.

This being the year during which he was Chairman of the London Congregational Union, he delivered his

presidential address at the Memorial Hall on April 9th. The subject was "Church Life in London." The August number of the magazine called the *Congregationalist* contained a portrait and a sketch of his life, which ended thus: "Time does its healing work, and the evangelical breadth and depth of Mr. White's ministry have long since been acknowledged, and he is now frankly and warmly welcomed in the pulpits of our churches as a faithful servant and soldier of Christ, without any sacrifice of freedom or principle on the part either of preacher or hearers. We have no decorative honours with which to distinguish our faithful ministers, but in those public and private testimonies of personal regard which Christian men hold much dearer Mr. White is rich indeed."

The foundation-stone of the new building in Lyndhurst Road, for the Hampstead Congregational Church, was laid on April 12th, and at the ceremony Mr. White met the veteran African missionary, Robert Moffat. Mr. White presided over the evening meeting in the Vestry Hall, and spoke on the influence of buildings in the perpetuation of ideas and the conservation of faith, and on the true idea of a Christian Church.

At the annual public meeting of the London Missionary Society in May of this year, Mr. White was one of the speakers. Following the Earl of Shaftesbury, who had spoken as Chairman, he delivered a very carefully prepared speech, which was afterwards characterized by a gentleman connected with the religious Press as the best missionary speech he had ever heard. Dr. Kennedy, however, in a letter to the *Nonconformist and Independent*, expressed a doubt whether one part of it would not tend to discourage missions. Mr. White therefore wrote to that paper in explanation and vindication of his position. In his letter he said: "Lord Shaftesbury's closing passages added, as Dr. Kennedy evidently sees, to the difficulties with which I had to contend at Exeter Hall. That which



I principally intended to maintain was, not some speciality of opinion, but the reality of historical prophecy, the dramatic unity of the divine government of the earth, and the approach of one of those great epochs of judgement which precede each of the chief developments of God's kingdom among the nations. . . . My point was that the warning of 'judgement' speedily coming, in some sense, on the existing systems of heathenism and corrupt Christianity, is a powerful means of striking the Asiatic imagination and conscience, which ought not to be cast aside in consequence of the extravagances of prophetic interpreters. . . . I am not at all certain about any details of Christ's reign on or over the earth in the latter days, much less of His personal 'visibility' during the millenium, and feel no vocation to make confident statements concerning them. The one thing which is clear to my mind is that divine prophecy is real, historical, and moral, and is a force not to be dispensed with just because Dr. Cumming and others have rendered it somewhat ridiculous. . . . The true use of the doctrine of Christ's *parousia* is not to discourage men in any line of duty, public or private, but to urge them on with zeal to assert Christ's present sovereignty, both in Church and State, at home and abroad."

These few sentences will serve to indicate his attitude towards the promised future advent of Christ. The incident is a specimen of what often followed after a speech by Mr. White, as he so often used expressions or made statements to which his hearers were not accustomed and which they were therefore apt to misunderstand.

At a Christian Conference in the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster Abbey, on the 11th of June, 1883, the Dean presiding, Mr. White read a paper on "The Relation of Public Worship to the Christian Life." He began by alluding to the great difference between the ideal and

the historical Church, but said: "It is a mistake to lose heart by dwelling too much on the history of degeneration, when it is possible for each successive age, first by the study of the ideal and next by communion with the living God and His servants, to return nearer and nearer to the true conception, both of Church life and of public worship." The essential conditions of these two having been stated and the prominence in our Lord's teaching of private prayer rather than of public worship, the paper goes on to say: "The evil public element in religion is the subject of some of Christ's earliest and sternest warnings, the danger of ostentation in almsgiving, in fasting, and in devotion. . . . The Pharisee of the Gospel history, whose face is too long ('of a sad countenance'), whose purse is too long (who 'devours widows' houses'), whose robes are too long (who 'loves to go in long clothing'), is the man whose visible devotions also are too long ('for a pretence he makes long prayers'), and this strong hand tears him and his phylacteries in pieces, as a warning of the judgement of heaven upon a public worship which has no relation with solid personal goodness." After pointing out and lamenting the divisive influence of modern English Church life, which "embodies and expresses in its public worship, doubtless with much that is better, the whole sum of the antagonisms, intellectual, social, doctrinal, of the last two thousand years, instead of their most catholic thoughts and comprehensive sympathies," and then contrasting the rigidity of the Anglican services with the lack of reverence in many of those of the Nonconformists, Mr. White further laments "that public worship, including under that designation the preaching and teaching which forms a part of it, has come to exercise far too little energy in the deeper formation of English character on week-days." This, he thinks, is "partly because, neglecting the social instruction which comes from the familiar conference of

small companies, we expect too much in the formation of character from public service, and from discourses on abstract themes delivered to persons sitting silent on a lower level at a distance, and chiefly because there is too little teaching of definite morality. . . . In close connection with this want of practical application to the actual world in public teaching is the too exclusive place given, under popular Christianity, to the virtues of 'imperfect obligation,' such as almsgiving, to the neglect of instruction in those of 'perfect obligation,' such as the duties of temperance and chastity, the duty of justice in money dealings, the duties of home and business, the duties of superiors, inferiors, and equals, and finally the duty of searching for and certifying truth. A little of our zeal for definitions in theology might advantageously go into the sphere of practical morals." In closing, he makes one practical suggestion, and one encouraging reflection. The suggestion is the opening of all religious buildings daily as places for quiet retreat and prayer. "Wherever the Church edifices are thus open and are reckoned not too holy to be useful to man, those buildings . . . become endeared to the labouring population. The encouragement to ourselves is this: There is abroad and around us everywhere an influence distinct from all ecclesiastical endeavours, higher than all existing church worships, a spirit moulding character and uniting divinely touched souls with an energy far greater than that of any visible institutions. In spite of all traditional hindrances, under this influence the party walls become transparent to us. We see each other, and feel each to each in the relations of an interior churchmanship. If we know God, in a growing measure we know good men when we see them, in every stage of their theological development; and we are drawn to them by an attraction which we find to be irresistible and know to be eternal, in the chambers of the 'Jerusalem above, which is the mother of us all.'"

Preaching for Dr. Dale at Birmingham, in July, while Carr's Lane Chapel was undergoing repair and the services were being held in the Town Hall, Mr. White stood on the spot where Mendelssohn had stood when he conducted his oratorio of "Elijah" on its first performance in England. In recognition of that fact in the history of the building, he chose for the subject of discourse the story of Elijah as told in 1 Kings xviii.

This year's holiday was spent in August at Padstow, various excursions being made from that centre. St. Columb was thus visited more than once, St. Evals being taken on the way; Mawgan Convent Church, Trevose Point and lighthouse, Wadebridge, Newquay, Tintagel, and Boscastle were also visited. While at Padstow a new lifeboat was brought thither and launched, making quite a commotion among the simple Cornish folk, who greeted the new arrival with singing, shouting, flags, and a procession. The sea, with its perpetual variety, is always and everywhere an unfailing source of interest and often of pleasure to the observer, and one day while on this north coast of Cornwall, after watching the waves rolling in and dashing against the rocky cliffs, Mr. White wrote: "It was the finest spectacle of the sea waves I ever saw, the wind being landwards. Rows of billows, each higher than the last, towering up in foam over the green water, and then dashing against the headlands and into the coves and over the broken foundations of the ancient cliffs." He was charmed with the Cornish scenery generally, some of which he described in glowing terms.

During this summer the case between Mr. Bradlaugh and the House of Commons was the theme of lively discussion, both in that House and outside. The Government of Mr. Gladstone brought in a Bill to enable those who could not conscientiously take the prescribed oath to make a solemn affirmation in lieu of it. This Bill was supported by Mr. Gladstone in a noble speech, which won Mr.



White's admiration, in favour of the civil liberties of all citizens, whether Christian believers or not.

In October, Mr. White attended the meetings of the Congregational Union at Sheffield, and took part in some of them by his speech as well as by his presence.

In the same month he assisted in the ordination of Mr. W. D. McLaren, M.A., as pastor of the Church at Creaton, in Northamptonshire, and gave the charge to the young minister. He also told how Mr. McLaren's introduction to Creaton came about, through a conversation between Dr. Dale and himself, under the oak in his garden at Mill Hill.

On November 6th came the meeting of the London Congregational Union, at which Mr. White, as Chairman, gave an address on "The Danger of Extreme Anti-Ritualism."

In the *Homiletic Magazine* of 1883 was published a "Symposium" on the question, "In what sense and within what limits is the Bible regarded as the Word of God?" A contribution to this discussion from Mr. White's pen appeared in the December issue. In his article he begins by setting aside the old ecclesiastical idea of the Bible as one book, in which every part has received the sanction of the Church in the early Christian ages as authentic and divinely inspired; he then urges the need of falling back for a basis upon the statements of the Scripture writers themselves, as to the measure and quality of their own inspiration. He goes on to show that, "If the whole New Testament were blotted out of human memory to-morrow, with the exception of a single Gospel, suppose that of St. Matthew, and that Gospel came to us floating on the stream of general history just as an ancient work, without any recommendation whatever from Church authority, and without any annexed theory as to its inspiration, . . . there would exist in the self-evidencing worth of that single

writing an amply sufficient basis for faith in Jesus as the Son of God and Saviour of the world. The only question would be: Is this wonderful and holy narrative of the teaching, the miracles, the life, the sufferings, the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth true? . . . If you have not ground to believe in the historical truth of the four Gospels from intellectual and moral reasons, . . . you cannot possibly attain solid belief in them by setting up a doctrine of verbal inspiration. . . . But if you already have reason to believe, from their tone and style, that Matthew and Luke are thoroughly honest and well-informed, and above all, God-fearing writers, recording the substantial truth, you gain nothing by the notion of the Canon or by the gratuitous hypothesis of verbal infallibility as the law of the composition. . . . Take the historical books of the Bible for what they are worth as human histories. Do they record events truly? If they do, then the higher *dogmatic* pretensions to inspired authority on the part of prophets and apostles can be sustained, or rather these follow upon the truth of the history. . . ."

Here follows Mr. White's answer to those (in our days sadly too numerous) who maintain that in the recorded teaching of Jesus before His death we have the whole of Christianity, and so set aside the authority of the apostolic writings. These ignore the important fact that not until after His death and glorious resurrection was it possible to make men understand the true meaning and scope of the Gospel message, and that it is only in those unappreciated apostolic writings that we see the development of the teaching of the risen Christ, during those forty days of frequent communion between the resurrection and the ascension, and that of the subsequent teaching by the Spirit. Accepting the historical books on their merits, and as not themselves claiming special inspiration, Mr. White proceeds: "But it is far otherwise with those books of

apostolic origin which contain the *dogmatic* teaching of the prophets and apostles. Here we find, time after time, the most explicit claim to speak *to believers* by a direct inspiration and command of God. . . . We find this alike in the pages of Isaiah and in the Epistles of SS. Paul, Peter, and John. In every one of his epistles St. Paul distinctly and emphatically claims to speak with the direct and infallible authority of the risen Christ, except in two or three small matters on which he gives his opinion. A full induction of every phrase in his writings asserting or implying such a direct inspiration would require an abstract of nearly half his writings. The whole second epistle to the Corinthians is an elaborate and unflinching assertion of this claim. Here, then, there is no alternative except that of either receiving his teaching as divinely authoritative, or of rejecting it; and that must be determined by each man according to his general belief or unbelief in the history of Paul's commission as an apostle by the apparition of Christ, thrice recorded in the narrative of St. Luke, and according to his spiritual recognition of the divine element in this apostle's life and writings, in which he 'commends himself to every man's conscience.'"

Taught by the Spirit we may be led to "perceive that inward spiritual unity of the holy writings which does indeed interiorly organize them into a 'Canon' and a 'Bible' for discerning eyes, at the end rather than at the beginning of the Christian life." Towards a correct estimate and exposition of the Bible, Mr. White believes that "the first step is resolutely to fling aside the post-Nicene theory of the inspiration of 'the Bible' as a whole, to resolve this Bible into its original elements, and to regulate our view of each of these component parts by the writer's own testimony concerning the degree in which he was 'moved by the Holy Ghost.' And while this will modify the sense in which we shall habitually speak of the whole collection, from Genesis to Revelation, as equally

and fully and directly and permanently he 'Word of God,' it will leave us with an ever-growing sense of the substantial truth of its histories, and I think with nothing less than an infinitely deeper and more submissive reverence for the *authoritative* teaching of those who were the prophets of Judaism, and the apostles of the Gospel."

In the *Homiletic Magazine* of March 1884 it was asserted that Mr. White's article was "the clearest, the ablest, and the most powerful of the whole series."

During the years 1882 and 1883 Mr. White was deeply and painfully interested in certain proceedings that were going on in Brussels in relation to the Protestant Church in the Rue Belliard, of which the pastor was Mr. Byse, the translator of his book *Life in Christ* into French. The result of those proceedings was, that because of his teaching that immortality is only to be had through Christ, Mr. Byse was obliged, by the action of the Synod of the Belgian Christian Missionary Church, to quit his post as pastor of a Church of which the members, with one or two exceptions, wished him to remain, being warmly attached to him while he was as warmly attached to them.

At the beginning of 1884 there was a fusion of the *English Independent* with the *Nonconformist* under the joint title the *Nonconformist and Independent*. A portrait of Mr. Edward Miall, the originator of the *Nonconformist*, was issued with the first number of the new paper, which contained a highly appreciative article by Edward White, on the character, career, and eminent public services of Edward Miall. In this article he wrote: "No sufficient estimate can be formed of Mr. Miall's public services except by those who can compare the present state of affairs with the condition of things at the time when the *Nonconformist* was originated. There has been effected nothing less than a revolution in the public and political position of Free Church principles and their adherents in England, and without injustice to the claims of others it



may be truly said that to no single agency is this revolution due so much as to the life-long campaigning of Mr. Edward Miall. . . . It is simply to deny manifest fact to question the statement that among the most efficient causes inciting the nation to demand parliamentary changes in the direction of religious equality, Mr. Miall's writing and ultimately his activity in the legislature are to be reckoned in the first rank during the last thirty years. . . . Every man who was engaged in a difficult conflict for more reasonable ideas in morals or divinity found in him substantially a steady and sympathizing supporter. He knew by experience the trial of being conscientiously compelled to think and speak at right angles to prevailing opinions and interests ; of being denounced as heretical by men who, if they had but a little more ability, would become the most pernicious heretics extant ; of being taunted with the weight of hostile majorities when their hostility as majorities was mainly due to the silence or imperfect honesty of the very men who flung the taunt and should have led the way to justice and reform."

These last sentences, perfectly true with respect to Mr. Miall, might have been written to describe his own personal experiences. The article was very widely appreciated, according to the testimony of the editor ; and it shows that Mr. White's estimate of the man and his work had not been lowered, but rather raised, since the time when he preached the memorial sermon on Mr. Miall's death in 1881.

Early in 1884 Mr. White took a party of fifty working men to the British Museum, where he pointed out to them and explained a number of the interesting relics of ancient Egypt, which are there preserved. He had some time previously made Egypt the subject of several of his lectures to artizans.

On January 17th he assisted in the ordination of Mr. R. F. Horton, M.A., of Hampstead.

At this time Mr. Moody was holding evangelistic meetings in London, several of which Mr. White attended. After one of these, he took Mr. Moody home to tea, and they had much conversation together on evangelistic work, and on the various modes of presenting the Gospel. After another of these meetings Mr. White went to assist in the inquiry-room ; and one of the persons with whom he talked was an artizan who had heard some of his lectures, and who was then troubled with doubts and difficulties from a Unitarian standpoint.

In connection with a visit in May to West Haddon in Northamptonshire, where on the Sunday he preached in the morning at the Baptist Chapel, and in the evening at the Methodist place of worship, Mr. White drove to Naseby and went over the field of battle, tracing its course on Broadmore.

His Merchants' Lectures for July were printed in a small volume with the title, *The Laws and Limits of Responsibility*. The third of these, "Pardon not Impunity," set forth a truth which he had taught twenty years before,<sup>1</sup> but which needed to be uttered afresh.

On June 30th he was present at the funeral of his personal friend but theological adversary, Rev. J. Baldwin Brown, at Norwood Cemetery.

The jubilee of the emancipation of all slaves in the British Empire was celebrated on August 1, 1884, by a great meeting in the London Guildhall, over which the Prince of Wales presided. Mr. White was present ; he could not have absented himself on such an occasion, and he records his own recollection of the event fifty years previously, when he was a scholar at Mill Hill, and of his reading in the newspapers about the celebrations in the West Indies at that time.

Ten days at the end of August and beginning of

<sup>1</sup> In *The Mystery of Growth*. Discourse on "The Secondary Consequences of Sin."

September were spent at Boulogne, with which city he was already familiar through several previous visits. Here he studied afresh the Roman Catholic religion in its working and influence. He went several times to the great Cathedral of Notre Dame upon the hill, and not only there but everywhere found Mary as the goddess taking the place of Christ, and a religion of outward ceremonies and observances. In connection with this visit he observes the difficulty of English Protestants in influencing any of the French Roman Catholics, kept asunder as they are by the double wall of race and language. Yet the apostles of Christ went as foreigners into every Greek and Roman province, and although separated from the people and leaders by even stronger differences, they made converts to Christ in every city, and succeeded in gathering into one community in every place men of every tongue, colour, culture ; barbarian, Greek, Negro, Roman, Asiatic, lord, and slave. How could this have been done except by an inspired language, an inspired doctrine, and a God-given miraculous energy of attestation?

At the invitation of the Committee of the Baptist College at Bristol he gave the annual address to the students on their reassembling after the autumn vacation. He went to Bristol on the 9th of September, and was the guest of his old friend Dr. Trestrail, with whom he spent a quiet evening reviewing past experiences. The following morning he delivered the address in Broadmead Chapel, dealing in it with the need for connected exposition of the Scriptures as a most important part of the Christian ministry. There was a large attendance in addition to the students, and some persons there told him that they had known him at Cardiff, at Hereford, and at his baptism at Broadmead, one stating that he had assisted him in coming out of the water.

In the latter part of September he spent nine days at Keswick, with his brother and party, exploring that

picturesque region and meeting with some interesting company.

The autumnal meetings of the Congregational Union were held in London this year, from 6th to 10th October. In the discussions Mr. White spoke on the relation of the Colleges to the Churches, and advocated increased use of the Church buildings, and their opening as *proseuchæ*, or places for quiet and prayer.

In the *Homiletic Magazine* for March 1885 a "Symposium" on "The Foundations of the Belief in the Immortality of Man" was concluded by an article from Mr. White's pen, to which he had devoted much attention in the preceding months. In it he deals first with the meaning of Immortality, which he distinguishes from survival, as that may be only temporary. He takes severely to task one of his predecessors in the Symposium for the assertion that the soul "by the law of its being will live for ever," quoting against him a number of eminent names, including that of Prof. Bonney, who in his Hulsean Lecture in December had declined to rest man's hope of immortality on "the law of his being." He discusses the ancient Egyptian belief, and that of the Hebrew nation, and the *Confession of Faith* of the Presbyterian Churches, and then introduces his own explanation of the Scripture teaching, as indicating that human immortality is to be had only by the impartation to the individual of a new and divine life, this being made possible only by the redemption wrought by Jesus Christ. In closing he points out that if the defenders of this doctrine are the minority at present, in the earlier stages of a controversy, the authorities on either side should be weighed rather than counted.

During many months of 1885 Mr. White suffered from intermittent action of the heart and loss of voice, which obliged him to abstain from his accustomed public work. Taken ill on the 15th February, he consulted his medical attendant the next day, and was advised to take entire



rest for two months. Accordingly he went to Bourne-mouth on the 19th; but returning on the 27th, he remained at home through March and April. His condition was still such as to preclude public speech, and the two months' rest had eventually to be extended to six. Provision had therefore to be made for the supply of the pulpit at Hawley Road during his absence. This was done by the appointment as his assistant of Mr. D. Basil Martin, M.A., who remained in that relationship to the end of Mr. White's pastorate, and was then chosen to be his successor. In the beginning of May a few days were spent at Harrogate, without much benefit. At that time the spring meetings of the Congregational Union were being held, and on May 11th, the sixty-sixth anniversary of his birth, Mr. White was chosen Chairman for 1886, on the first ballot, and by twice as many votes as were needed for election, no other name being mentioned. This result was received with enthusiasm by the assembly, indicating the greatness of the change since the time when he was kept out of the Union and the pulpits of the Churches. After this he tried a few days at Eastbourne and Hastings, but returned without improvement. In June he went again to Harrogate, and while there his trouble was increased by a break-down in Mrs. White's health. This induced him to go to Nottingham on his homeward journey, in order to consult his son Charles, who was residing there in practice as a doctor. His advice was that they should go at once to Switzerland or to the South of France.

In accordance with this advice they returned home and immediately prepared for the journey, staying in London one night only. On June 19th they reached Paris, where they remained two days, after which they went by the night train to Lausanne, and the next day to Glion, a high point above Montreux, at the upper end of the Lake of Geneva, from which there is a fine view of the lake and

of the mountains beyond it. Mr. White writes of it as an ideal picture from the garden and balcony of the hotel, a row of catalpas forming a shady cover for seats, a rose-hedge in front, the foreground sloping down 800 feet to the blue lake. In the evening there was a wonderful ruddy sunset, with fine after-glow on the snow-crowned Dent du Midi to the left, and a purple splendour on the Savoy Mountains in front. His delight in the beauties of nature has already been mentioned ; of this scene he says : " This beauty never palls. It is the eternal 'beauty of the Lord our God.' "

Leaving Glion on July 2nd, in order to reach higher ground, they went first to Aigle in the Rhone Valley, staying the night there. The next day they proceeded up that valley by the railway to Brieg, thence after lunch by diligence to Viesch, whence on horseback they ascended to the Aegischhorn Hotel. The sojourn there, in the vitalizing mountain air, and in the midst of magnificent mountain scenery, soon had the desired effect, and after a week's stay they were able to walk by the Rieder Alp and the Aletsch glacier to the Bel Alp. There Sunday was spent, and Mr. White met and had a long talk with Professor Tyndall, whose chalet is a little way above the hotel. On the Monday, July 13th, again on foot, they went down to Brieg, where they took train for Lausanne, and thence continued their journey to Neuchâtel. In the evening of the following day a two hours' journey by diligence took them to Chaumont, in the Jura range, where Dr. Petavel was then staying at his little chalet not far from the hotel. A full week was spent there ; and being so near to the Petavels' chalet they often went there and enjoyed much intercourse with the family. Mr. Byse also spent a day with them during their stay.

Descending from Chaumont to Neuchâtel, on the 21st July, they went by night train to Paris and so home by Calais and Dover. From the height of Chaumont, in very

clear weather there is a most magnificent view of the whole range of the Bernese Oberland, a view extending from the Säntis on the left to the chain of Mont Blanc on the right. This glorious vision was revealed to the travellers on the last day of their stay, a vision never to be forgotten by those who have seen it. Mr. White went down from Chaumont to Neuchâtel on foot along with Dr. Petavel, and he refers to that walk as having been "a feast of colour, the bright sapphire lake gleaming through the green fir-trees, and turning their foliage into all sorts of splendour. Several reaches of the trees like a long cathedral nave." Elsewhere he writes: "I shall never forget it; it was a spectacle worthy of the Alps seen in the morning."

After his return from Switzerland he was able to resume his preaching and pastoral duties, but for some time suffered a good deal with sciatica.

On August 17th there was a farewell meeting at Camden Road Chapel for six missionaries who were going out to the Congo region, including T. J. Comber, one of the pioneers of that mission, his brother Percy, and four others. Mr. White was present, and took an interest in watching the career of these young men, all of whom died during his lifetime.

In this year the autumnal meetings of the Congregational Union were held at Hanley. Mr. White attended them, and one evening went on to Macclesfield, where he gave an address on "Independency," that being a word descriptive of a wider idea than Congregationalism, signifying local Church government, but inclusive of all Christians in the Church area. During these meetings he came into contact with Gipsy Smith, whose evangelistic work he appreciated highly.

In the October number of the *Homiletic Magazine* appeared a contribution to a "Symposium" on the question: "Is Salvation possible after death?" While agreeing with

some preceding articles in the view that the Scripture gives no hope of such salvation for those who have heard and rejected or neglected the Gospel message in this life, he admits that for the ignorant and heathen there may be an opportunity, and that none will be finally condemned until they have come into contact with Jesus Christ, and have understood His claim on their faith ; and he quotes various Scripture passages in support of this belief. But as he says, " The result of such opportunity may not always be their salvation."

At the opening of the new chapel in Robertson Street, Hastings, on October 21st Mr. White spoke on buildings in relation to the Gospel, and the condition of spiritual success in the spiritual edifice.

In November came the General Election, and Mr. White took a public part in it, presiding at a meeting in favour of Mr. Waddy, Q.C., in North Islington, and speaking at another on behalf of Mr. Gibb in St. Pancras.

In all these months since May, when he was chosen to be Chairman for 1886, he was constantly and carefully considering and preparing for his address, to be delivered from the chair in the coming May. From time to time, during his forced abstention from public speaking, both at home and abroad he had made very numerous and even voluminous notes on the various subjects that he intended to introduce into that address. He considered the Chairmanship as being not so much an honour as an important post of duty, and was determined that in that post his best energies should be heartily exerted. Before leaving for Switzerland he wrote to Rev. W. D. McLaren, M.A. : " Many congratulations are coming to me about the Chairmanship, but very few seem to think of it otherwise than as an honour. To me it is chiefly in prospect a new cross, because the right thing to be said can scarcely be very acceptable to many. You will pray for me that ' I may open my mouth boldly, as I ought to speak,' to declare the mystery of the Gospel."



## CHAPTER XIV

### CHAIRMAN OF THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION

1886 ; AGE 66-67

BY this time much of the prejudice against Mr. White had died away, and a great change had come over the general theological world. Not so many ministers were preaching the old doctrine of endless suffering as the fate of the impenitent, and those who did so, presented it in a much modified form and tone. Moreover, the steady and sturdy evangelical character of Mr. White's preaching and of his Church had become widely known, so that when the time came for him to take his place in the Chair of the Union, he was received very heartily by the Churches, and was soon in great request among them for preaching and speaking on special occasions. His engagements of this sort, outside his own pastorate during his year of office, numbered more than sixty, in all parts of the country, north and south, east and west, from Whitby to Bournemouth, and from Norwich to Swansea. To mention them all would be wearisome, but some of them were made the occasion for remarkable and characteristic utterances, which deserve some notice.

Notwithstanding these numerous engagements away from home, he did not neglect his monthly lectures to artizans, of which he missed only two of the usual dates, and one of these was supplied by Dr. Allon. The first

lecture of this year on January 3rd, being the seventy-second of the series, was on "The Great Choice and the Great Refusal." Starting with the story of Elijah and the priests of Baal, on mount Carmel, Mr. White pointed out that in England the choice lies not between Jehovah and Baal, but between the Living God, the author of Nature and Christianity, and no God at all, a life without religion.

In this first week of his chairmanship, in response to an appeal by a brother minister, published in the *Nonconformist and Independent*, he wrote a letter to that paper respecting special seasons of prayer for an outpouring of the Spirit, some writers having suggested that the annual meetings of the Union in May should be made such a season. He wrote chiefly, as he said, to remind his brethren of that which all know, but sometimes forget, that seasons of prayer for the Spirit's help are of no avail apart from immediate repentance from those "dead works," those known sins by which he is "resisted," "vexed," and "grieved" in actual life; and that such seasons of repentance and confession are in the first instance best spent in the preliminary retirement of home.

On February 18th a meeting was held at Hawley Road for the public recognition of the Rev. D. Basil Martin as assistant minister to Mr. White, a position in which he had already rendered very efficient service.

During this winter there was a large amount of poverty and distress in London, and Mr. White was much occupied with relief of the distress in various ways, in connection with the Charity Organization Society, and otherwise. There was a special committee, which sat at the St. Pancras Vestry, to superintend the distribution of relief from the Lord Mayor's Central Fund, and in this work Mr. White took an active share, in spite of his numerous other engagements.

The President-elect of the Baptist Union being the

Rev. Charles Williams, of Accrington, an old friend of Mr. White, it was arranged between them, with the concurrence of their committees, that the Spring assemblies of the two Unions should be held simultaneously, and that there should be two joint meetings. The necessary arrangement of details relating to these joint meetings involved several conferences between the two Presidents and their committees. When in London on this business Mr. Williams was the guest of Mr. White. The joint meetings were held on May 14th, in the City Temple, that in the morning being a joint assembly of the two Unions, presided over by Mr. Williams ; that in the evening, a public meeting, at which Mr. White was chairman.

Presiding over the evening public meeting, Mr. White, after explaining the character and meaning of the gathering, which he said would have no real significance apart from the reality of Christ's present life in the heavens, described the way in which it had been brought about. He said : " This is the first time that our two Unions have met together in their annual assemblies. The origin of the movement was in a sudden flash of inspired genius on the mind of Dr. Hannay,<sup>1</sup> in a parenthesis in the middle of a sentence on another subject at the Hanley autumnal meeting of last year, when he interjected the proposal that during my chairmanship some action might perchance be proposed in this direction. You know the rest. The project was warmly entertained by Mr. Booth,<sup>2</sup> and by my dear old friend and fellow-soldier, Mr. Charles Williams, and I need not say joyfully promoted by me. The majority of the members of either Union are personally strangers to each other. The only qualification which I possess to occupy this chair to-night—which I consider a greater honour than to occupy the seat of my namesake, the Archbishop of Canterbury<sup>3</sup>—arises from the accidents

<sup>1</sup> Secretary of the Congregational Union.

<sup>2</sup> Secretary of the Baptist Union.      <sup>3</sup> Edward White Benson.

of my theological life which have made me, perhaps more than many present, acquainted with the men of both the Congregational Brotherhoods, and with their work during this generation. And here before God I thank Him for this double connection ; for the life-long and reverent friendship, or more distant knowledge, which He has given me during the past forty years, in youth or age, not only with the leading ministers and laymen of both bodies, but with many of the congregations, and with a glorious company of their missionaries from all parts of the world." Having mentioned the names of a large number of these, he thus continued : "Missionaries, ministers, scholars, builders in the living temple all, who have enabled me to understand a great deal better than I could if I had known but one single set of God's sons, what is meant when it is said that we are 'come to the general Assembly and Church of the Firstborn,' and better to imagine what the wealth of that world will be when the sections of Christianity, already so rich in the divided tints and colours of the rainbow, will be absorbed and united in the white light of Christ's eternal splendour. . . . If this wider knowledge has come to me through a blunder in my theology, or a defect in my sectarian zeal, I bless the destiny which gave me over to believe a good deal with the Baptists and to work with the Independents, a destiny which has ensured me a life-time of such inspiring friendships and glorious recollections of the saints living and departed. But, my brethren, we all, I trust, by God's grace are going forward to some still better thing, in the vision of a world where soon we shall see and rejoice with the whole company of the faithful, 'redeemed unto God out of every nation and kindred and people and tongue.'"

Fifteen years later the experiment was repeated, but alas ! Mr. White did not live to see and rejoice over the similar manifestation of brotherly love at the joint meetings of the two Unions in 1901, at which the concourse was so



vast that the great City Temple could not receive all who wished to take part in them. The very success of these joint assemblies has rendered their further repetition difficult, the numbers desiring to unite in them having become too great to be accommodated in any available building.

On May 11th, his own birthday, Mr. White delivered, also in the City Temple, his address to the Congregational Union as its Chairman, the subject being, "Free Church Foundations, or the application of the apostolic distinction between Law and Grace to the Theology, Ethics, and Politics of the modern Independents." That address was referred to, some months later, by a London religious weekly, as having been "the most extraordinary ever delivered from that position," and with an expression of wonder that it had not produced a mightier effect upon general religious opinion. It had been, as already indicated, the outcome of much thought and careful preparation, embodying principles which he had long held and taught by voice and pen, although never before to such an audience or from so influential a position. For a whole year it had been prominent in his thoughts and prayers, and it was one of the principal subjects of his study during the months of his enforced silence. It was considerably longer than such addresses usually are, and although he read for two hours he was obliged to omit a good deal; it was, however, published in full in a handy form, and the following is a concise abstract of it.

At the beginning of his address, after alluding to the convictions in which he differed from many Congregationalists, Mr. White said that the difficulties of his position had been minimized by the general understanding that no theological significance of an exceptional character attached to his appointment as Chairman. He proceeded to survey the progress of the Independent Churches during the preceding half century, and referred to the increased freedom

allowed for the expression of individual thought, and to various changes that had taken place in the prevailing ideas concerning some of the doctrines and rites of Christianity. Three facts might be perceived affecting the development of Congregationalism in the future. (1) The continued existence of the ancient evangelical spirit which rejects the notion of baptismal regeneration, and is based on recognition of the absolute authority of apostolic doctrine. (2) The reaction towards reform in relation to the divine services and the sacred ministry. Many Nonconformists made too little of the dignity of the Christian pastorship, and too often appointed as teachers unqualified men, and public worship had been degraded by irreverent customs and language. Hence there was a necessity for the restoration of the due solemnity and dignity. (3) The presence of the party of theological reform which insists on reconciling theology with science, and the freest criticism with a spiritual faith. Although these reformers sometimes fall into the error of extravagance, they should receive patient and gentle treatment, for they contribute to the progress and power of the whole community.

### I. LAW AND GRACE IN THEOLOGY.

The cardinal distinction between law and grace is the essence of apostolic Christianity. It is this truth which shines as the pillar of fire in the van of the Free Churches, and through ignorance of which men are stumbling at the record of a miraculous revelation, because of the prominence which the study of nature has given to the idea of universal and unalterable law. But Christianity is represented by every one of the apostles, not as a revelation of law, but of grace; having its origin in those central depths of the Eternal Love in which the freedom of the Almighty Will is paramount over law itself, and in God's compassion for law-breakers. Sin and death are preter-natural evils in

the human condition, forming no part of the system or law of nature, and therefore they can be remedied only by super-natural grace and power. This offers a rational and credible account of the miraculous essence and evidence of revelation, and it follows that the main duty of the Christian preacher is not to be a teacher of law, but to press upon sinful and dying men the message of grace in Christ Jesus.

## II. THE ETHICS OF LAW AND GRACE.

Fundamental truths in theology necessarily determine the complexion of the moral system which accompanies them. The moral law is an expression of the absolute divine righteousness. It asserts the eternal claims of God as Creator and Ruler of all intelligent beings, and the eternal claims of all creatures on each other. Its profoundest principle is love. But according to the New Testament doctrine moral law is not *gracious*. It knows nothing of forgiveness any more than physical law. Hence by the law there is no salvation for law-breakers. God, however, has "so loved us" as to bestow pardon and life eternal freely on law-breakers, through the sacrifice of His beloved Son, and on this foundation of salvation by grace is built a new moral system, or the morality of grace, and the general principle which underlies the new moral code is that the grace of God should lead to gracious conduct in believing men. The Sermon on the Mount sets forth the new code, but the rules therein are not laid down as normal laws to be enforced on individuals who are not believers, much less on public authorities set for the defence of justice, and the restraint of evil-doers.

The mode in which the ethical system of Christ proceeds in contrast with legal morality might be illustrated in many particulars. For example—(1) in relation to the Consecration of Time. The old law of the seventh-day Sabbath was imposed under the penalty of death, but in

the system of Christ and His apostles this law does not reappear as a portion of the new moral code for His followers among the Gentiles ; and the observance of the Lord's Day is nowhere expressly commanded. Under the Gospel, though set times for rest and worship are needed, there is no such thing as the intrinsic holiness of portions of time and space. The merciful and restful temper should abide through the whole of the week. It should be considered right to use part of the Sunday sometimes for teaching, in the most interesting manner, all that it most behoves working Englishmen to learn on their one day of rest. (2) The distinction between the ethical systems of Law and Grace finds another important application in the department of Expenditure. The law required the tenth of a man's income, but the disciple of Christ is taught to give first of all his whole heart's love, and then to consecrate his life, strength, and resources, for the purposes of Christ's kingdom. (3) The influence of the ethical system of Christ under the reign of grace upon Family Life and the regulation of Amusements must receive a brief notice. In every one of his epistles St. Paul insists upon the loving subjection of the secondary ranks in the family to those who are placed above them by the providence of God. The apostolic ethics are clearly designed as a training for eternal service under a divine Monarchy ruling over a universe of innumerable ranks, and demanding loving subjection in all subordinate orders. Good and modest manners towards elders and superiors ought to be taught as a part of the Gospel.

The vast space which amusements occupy in modern and nominally Christian life makes it essential for the Church of God to make it clear as day that a determined limitation in pleasure-taking is one leading law of the Christian life. If the Churches of our country are to be maintained as spiritual powers, they must be persuaded to incur the "reproach of Christ" by presenting a more



solid front of open opposition to the vast expenditure of time and money on mere amusements.

Two examples of the danger which may arise from enforcing Christ's counsels of perfection *upon the surrounding world* as normal laws of morality are seen in the history of Church celibacy, and in the conduct of the total abstinence reformation by its unwiser advocates. Whenever the counsels of perfection which our Lord inculcates among Christians are set forth to the world as carrying the authority of eternal moral laws, the results have always proved most disastrous.

### III. LAW AND GRACE IN POLITICS.

The relations between the State and the Church may be summed up in a sentence. The State is the organization of justice ; the Church is the organization of grace. Both are divine institutions. The duty of the State is the assertion and protection by law, and the vindication, if needed by force, of the rights of all persons belonging to the commonwealth. The Church is a selected society consisting of believing men ; organized for the purpose of worship, of saving evil-doers, of teaching Christian truth, and practising Christian morality. Two societies differing so profoundly in their principles, constitution, methods, and aims cannot be united in one national organization without injury to each. In order to recognize moral principles in government it is not necessary to establish or endow Christianity and its Churches. The law of the State is, or should be, representative of the eternal law of justice as between man and man and between man and God, and it is set up expressly for the purpose of maintaining that law in its integrity, by upholding right and punishing crime, if necessary by the sword. But the religion of Christ represents the principle of grace, or forgiveness to law-breakers, and Christ exhorts His disciples to "turn the other cheek" to the wrongful smiter ; which is just the very thing that

the ruler of the State ought not to do. The history of England shows what terrible evils spring from the attempt to make these two radically different moral systems work in combination. No single cause has so much embittered English life, or provoked to irreligion the alienated multitudes, as the so-called State provision for the poor man's religion.

The relation of the Free Churches to the Anglican Church is one of opposition, not only to establishment and endowment by the State, but also to sacerdotal pretensions in the Christian ministry, and to superstitious perversions of the Christian sacraments. Yet the largely Scriptural Protestantism of the original constitution of the National Church must be acknowledged, and it should be remembered that the ancient Church of England translated, distributed, and caused to be read in churches the sacred Scriptures, the foundations of pure Christianity.

A closer union with the great and good men of all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, who abound in all communions can be attained only through a common return to the ecclesiastical life of the first two centuries in which free and powerful local Churches embraced all Christian believers; first, because nothing was imposed as a test except faith in Christ, hope, and charity; and next, because fellowship with godly men was accounted of more importance than the nominal churchmanship of hordes of baptized heathen and fashionable profligates.

"Meantime, while allowing such ideas slowly to percolate through society, and so to do their reconciling work between divided communities, let us intreat of the Almighty God that contests for political equality or theological reform may not rob us of the serious tenderness which alone can qualify us to reach the sorrowful and sinful multitudes around; and that while such contests last they may be conducted with a magnanimity and grace which will demonstrate the presence with us of

that Spirit in whom all Christian people are eternally one."

From Dr. Perowne, then Dean of Peterborough, to whom Mr. White had sent a copy of this address, he received a letter thanking him for it, and calling it "an address worthy of yourself and of the occasion on which it was delivered." The Dean wrote further: "The peroration of your address is, I think, the most magnificent eulogium ever pronounced on our Church. It is a model of the loftiest eloquence, written in the purest English, and with a breadth of sympathy, a large charity, a hearty, ungrudging appreciation of all that is excellent in the Church, which must not only make Churchmen grateful to you, but which, I cannot doubt, found an echo in the heart of many who heard you, and will tend, I firmly believe, more than any other utterance I have seen on either side, to allay animosities and promote Christian brotherhood."

The address was described by the *Christian World*, in a leading article, as "a complete, suggestive, and most valuable treatise on the relation of the distinction between Law and Grace to the theology, ethics, and politics of the modern Independents," which, having been delivered with great vigour and incisiveness, evoked "loud expressions of sympathy and admiration, even where the sentiments might have been expected a little to startle such an assembly." The same article declares that "the eloquent description given of the attractiveness and the glories of the Anglican Church ought for ever to stop the mouths of those Church defenders who can see in Liberationism nothing more than sectarian spite."

In the "Brief Notes" on the May Meetings in the *Congregationalist*, it was asserted that "Mr. White's address was fully equal to his own reputation, and exceeded any anticipations which had been formed in relation to it. From first to last it was a piece of sustained eloquence,

often marked by a rare felicity of expression, and lighted up by touches of quiet humour very characteristic of the man." It was further stated that "the address showed that vigorous independence in thought and that courage in utterance for which Mr. White has always been distinguished. Of course it will offend some people, but that is the lot of every man who dares to be true to himself. We should ourselves qualify some of his statements, particularly those relating to Sunday evening work."

Exception was taken by some to other parts of the address besides that relating to the proper use of Sunday. Thus, for his expressions on the subject of temperance and total abstinence he was very quickly put on his defence by the Congregational Total Abstinence Association. To the letter of the Secretary he replied, on the 24th of May, showing that those of his own actual statements against which objection was brought would not bear the construction put upon them, and then he wrote as follows: "Your friendly instruction on 'abstinence from things lawful for our brethren's sake' I take in good part, having myself tried to act upon it in several directions; but my point was, that we must not convert our praiseworthy self-denials in things lawful into absolute prohibitive laws for all other Christians; and above all must not confound temperance with incipient drunkenness. When the Roman clergy adopted a similar tone towards Luther on the question of celibacy, he replied by marrying Catherine von Bora.

"For myself, I do not feel at liberty to teach in the pulpit total abstinence as a part of Christ's Gospel, but only temperance in all things. In the pulpit I give incessant warnings against the first beginnings of free indulgence in intoxicants. . . ."

In relation to the duty of the State in the use of force, involving the question of war, the position taken in this address was the same as that which he had vindicated



with so much logical force against Mr. Henry Richard, then Secretary of the Peace Society, in 1860; and again in 1877, when that gentleman was Chairman of the Congregational Union.

Having at this time been chosen one of the Directors of the London Missionary Society, Mr. White's first attendance in that capacity was on May 24th. Thenceforward, for more than ten years, he continued thus to serve that Society, in which he always took a deep and particular interest, as he also did in the missionaries who were its agents.

On June 24th he gave an address at New College, specially to the students of that and the two other combined Colleges, who were then leaving to begin their work in the ministry. He began by speaking of the question of authority as between the soul, the Church, and the divine Revelation, and asked: "Are your minds solidly made up on the question whether you are to go forth as the Lord's messengers and obedient ambassadors, or are you to go forth in the character of moderately inspired prophets and apostles on your own account? This is really the question which to-day underlies all other questions in the theological colleges and in evangelical ministries. . . . According as this question has been settled in our own minds in one way or the other, it will of course determine the direction and complexion both of our life-long studies and of our aims. . . . I doubt not this question has been decided by you as men who during the past few years have, while conversant with many other books, made the private study of the New Testament and constant prayer for the illuminating grace of the Holy Spirit to fall both on its pages and on your own hearts, your main pursuit." He proceeded to indicate a few practical conclusions drawn from his own rather prolonged experience of the work. The first of these was the great importance of maintaining the knowledge of Holy Scripture in its original languages.

"It is only by the personal, continuous, incessant, and sympathetic study of the Bible, from one end to the other, that you can come to know and feel the overpowering spiritual influence of the Divinity and the Shekinah which dwells within it. The Word which has been made letter is like the Word which has been made flesh." A second of these conclusions was the importance of private and personal contact and conversation with those who are to be the subjects of ministerial influence, and the little effect of public discourse in moulding character. "The teaching of Jesus to His disciples was far more frequently conveyed in dialogue than in discourse; and the teaching of any man who desires really to reach the busy crowds of modern men and women must consist more and more in conversing freely with small companies of them, in Bible-classes, or in parlour conversations, or in absolutely private interviews, especially when they are young and their hearts are yet tender." The third point insisted on was the superlative importance of maintaining the spirituality of the Churches. He said: "Allow me to conjure you not to assist with your voices or example the contemptible process which is going forward in many quarters of converting Nonconformity into a shabby and flabby imitation of parochial Anglicanism of the Broad Church type. . . . The very essence of Free Church worship is that it shall be spiritual, that our societies shall consist of persons individually confessing Christ and hopefully the subjects of spiritual regeneration. Apart from this idea, I do not understand what makes it worth while to incur the disadvantages of separation and social excommunication in England."

After the close of this address, at the business meeting, it was announced that Mr. White had accepted the invitation to occupy the chair of Homiletics during the ensuing two years. This engagement he found exceedingly interesting, bringing him as it did into close personal contact

and acquaintance with so many students preparing for the Christian ministry.

At the invitation of Canon Fremantle, Mr. White visited him in July when in residence at Canterbury in the precincts of the Cathedral. On Sunday the 25th he attended the services in the Cathedral morning and evening, and in the afternoon preached in the Crypt, in that part which was granted to the Huguenot refugees in the time of Queen Elizabeth for their reformed worship.

On the 28th of the same month he addressed the lads at Tettenhall College on modern improvements in the system of education, which now cares even for the dull and does not expend all time and energy in coaching up a few of those who, being quick, might be able to learn for themselves. He said that recent improvements had brought English education nearer to the Greek model, which he proceeded to sketch. He closed by charging the lads to carry into life that backbone of honesty, that manly faith which alone could direct their career, teaching them not to drift but to steer, and to steer by the stars straight for eternity.

In anticipation of the autumn assembly of the Union at Norwich in October, Mr. White had to prepare another address from the chair. The subject that he chose, "Handling the Scriptures," was one that he held to be of the utmost importance, and it had often been the topic of his public discourse and private conversation. But although the substance and the purpose of the address were by no means new to him, the manner and the setting were fresh, and the result of careful thought and preparation. The aim was to urge the need for more full and connected study and exposition of Holy Scripture. The following is a short synopsis of it :—

The Bible being the history of a divine revelation, there is urgent need for bringing it into closer contact with men's minds. The general custom of preaching from isolated

texts, commonly consisting of a single verse or sentence, cannot sufficiently set forth the meaning and unity and authority of the Scriptures, for the Bible is the record of a progressive and organized revelation, requiring careful and consecutive study of all its parts. If this had been more common in the Churches, some of the principal delusions on doctrine and discipline might have been exploded long ago. The ability of the Protestant Churches to stand firm against the tide of scepticism, superstition, and worldliness must come from the steadfast, laborious ministry of men who will awaken, first of all among the more intelligent Christians, a new and solemn passion for the study of the Holy Scriptures as a whole, in a humble and constructive spirit, and not in the haughty temper of what is now too often called enlightened criticism; and next, from a far more graphic and coloured representation of the Sacred History. From an increase of such consecutive unfolding of Scripture four principal advantages may be expected to arise.

1. The faith of thoughtful men will be made more clear and strong. The difficulties attending the supernatural revelation, and the limitation and imperfection of the human element in the Bible, are likely to create involuntary scepticism unless the view of the divine element is clear and many-sided. The Bible as a whole is an overpowering reply to all serious objections to the Bible in detail. And its victory as a history does not depend, any more than English or Roman history, on the completeness of a canon, or on the minute accuracy of each historian in every jot and tittle of the narration.

That which a majority of even good men in Christendom, especially the teachers, call their religious faith, is too often the acceptance of articles imposed on them by impersonal organizations, and the main theological function of Scripture comes to be to prove by verse-texts some Church standard of human origin. Faith of this quality is akin to credulity on one side and to scepticism on the other, and



will not impel a man to speak and act with the force and fervour of the early messengers of Christ. Their faith was produced by close contact with Christ Himself, and then by close contact with the men who had heard and seen and handled of the Word of Life. It was not the result of listening to a few chosen sentences of theirs, but of a full and continuous attention to the teaching of Christ and His apostles; and if the faith of this age is ever to resemble the faith of the first, it must be alimented by the corresponding methods.

2. In addition to the gain of a deeper spiritual life in the Church and its ministry, a further gain might be expected from the establishment of a public judgement in support of Christianity. The people should be trained to study their Bibles as a connected history, freshly confirmed by every successive year's discoveries in archæology; as an organic whole, in which the analogy between nature and the supernatural history comes into prominence with every advance in biological knowledge; then popular faith could stand firm against the opinions of men who imagine that the discoveries of science discredit the Bible. Under the system of dealing with selected verses or phrases, it is scarcely possible to build up before the modern world the image of the many-sided Christ, or to overthrow the errors and superstitions arising from an incomplete conception of the Biblical teaching. Taken as a whole, and in the plain sense of the main current of its words, the Bible will be victorious in the conflict with scepticism and error.

3. A more regular and systematic reading and explanation of Holy Scripture in the Church would increase the variety, breadth, and colour of the instruction and bring a far deeper sense of Divine Authority accompanying the message.

The Bible contains a wonderful variety of marvellous histories, and biographies, and poems, and doctrinal arguments, and soul-moving exhortations, and awe-striking

prophecies. When these are opened in order before the people, in the light of modern knowledge and thought, they become exceedingly interesting, and so men are brought near to Christ's own authority in His permanently recorded Word. It is there only that it can be had at first hand. If the Holy Scripture be in any sense of the term the record of a divine Revelation, then the nearest approach to a final authority both for faith and practice is there. But this divine Authority will not be felt as it ought to be so long as the custom is tolerated for the teachers to consider the Bible only as a repository of texts, out of which a preacher may pick a few for his need, as David picked a bagful of pebbles from the brook to pierce the skull of his particular Philistine; and the danger will be imminent of men's yielding to the persistent clamour of Rome and the Jesuits. The advance of the priest in dominion over the people has always been measured by popular neglect of Holy Scripture, but sacerdotalism has no chance of progress among a population carefully taught by connected Biblical exposition.

4. A large increase in expository teaching would have an important effect on practical life and its motives.

When the writings of the prophets and apostles are explained in regular order, the most important lessons on human life in its principal relations must receive careful and deliberate consideration, and persons of every class will in turn be taught their duty; but under the method of dealing only with selected texts there is an inducement to avoid practical moral teaching. There is also a tendency towards the neglect of the sterner portions of the revelation, and when God's mercy is preached apart from His discipline, and apart from "judgement to come," the garden of the Lord soon lapses into an arid wilderness. "Against these evils the exact and continuous exposition of Holy Scripture offers the only sure defence. But all mere methods of handling the Holy Scriptures will fail apart from the

personal aid of that Holy Spirit of Grace and Power, by whose direct teaching alone men will see with unveiled face the eternal realities, and catch the inspirations of a Saviour's love."

Although this address was received by the assembly with warm approbation, it shared the usual fate of Mr. White's unconventional public utterances, in provoking adverse comments on details in the religious Press, based for the most part on misstatement of his words, amounting in some cases to a perversion of their meaning into a totally opposite sense.

In the course of the same month an announcement had been made that the Rev. H. R. Haweis would preach for Dr. Parker at the City Temple. This, however, was prevented by the Bishop of London, Dr. Temple. This action of the Bishop gave occasion for a loud outcry against him for narrowness and bigotry. Mr. White, however, wrote to the *Times* a letter which was published on October 30th, justifying the Bishop as having only done his duty. He wrote: "Not a few of us, with every facility for entering the Church of England, have sacrificed that career from regard to our own consciences on the question of subscription, and it appears to such persons that they ought to respect conscience in other men as much as they respect it in themselves. The Bishops are bound by the Act of Uniformity and by their own most solemn promises at their consecration to enforce it. It is the essential condition of the establishment of the Church. It is not a question of individual breadth or narrowness of view. Bishop Temple is not likely to err in such a case through pride or prejudice, or [to act] through anything less than principle. Let the questions of conformity be fought out on their merits, and let us not attempt to carry our contention by setting at naught solemn engagements. Just legislation cannot be promoted by private dishonour or by conniving at illegality. Let the existing law be

steadily enforced, and then before long the nation as a whole, shocked at the frightful disunion among Protestants, will insist on the amendment or repeal of the Act of Uniformity in the face of day, and all parties will be able to respect one another in the interval."

The Merchants' Lectures in November were on "Animals and their relations with God and Man." Of these Mr. White wrote thus to Dr. Petavel: "I must send you my lectures on animals because the last is a very bold and daring assertion of the truth from the chair of the Merchants' Lecturer, the first time I have done this hitherto. I have just quoted Scripture, without note or comment, and then said: 'If this does not naturally express popular ideas, the fault is not in apostolic language, but in the popular ideas.' So leaving them to get reconciled to St. Paul, and cautioning them not to call him a heretic meanwhile." The fact that a doctrine can thus be taught in Scripture language is surely presumptive evidence of its truth.

The foregoing may suffice to indicate the large amount of public work done during this year of office. It was a matter of thankfulness to Mr. White that his voice had not once failed him, although in the preceding year its failure had kept him almost silent for months together. He rejoiced in all his numerous opportunities of becoming acquainted with the Churches, and of making them better acquainted with himself and his earnestly evangelical teaching. On the 27th December he wrote to Rev. W. D. McLaren: "My year is ending, a year of wonderful health and strength, after one of illness and nearness to death. I have made sixty expeditions, near and far, and have not failed once in my voice. The good Lord grant that some fruit may grow from all this seed-sowing. . . . I shall be glad of the cessation of my publicity. . . . Yet I have accepted so many invitations because I thought it



accustomed the public to the idea that people of our way of thinking may be employed by the Churches in such functions and make it easier for others. In private conversation also in families, there have been many opportunities of speaking the truth on moral topics. . . . I find the New College work difficult, but pleasant. It gives an opportunity of constantly insisting on Scripture study."

A word may here be added as to Mr. White's political position at this time. He had taken an active part in the General Election in November 1885. In the election that followed the rejection of Mr. Gladstone's Bill for giving Home Rule to Ireland in 1886, he was in some doubt as to the wisdom of that proposal, but considering the long tale of wrongs suffered by the Irish, and believing that Mr. Gladstone's Bill had been an honest attempt to right those wrongs, he decided to give his support to the Liberal side. Accordingly he supported the Liberal candidate for North Islington, the division in which he resided, and went to Walthamstow to speak for Mr. Albert Spicer. It was understood that before another presentation of the Home Rule Bill to Parliament it should be altered in some particulars, and Mr. White evidently felt the need for this, as he wrote: "The one condition of Home Rule for Ireland is the extension of the principle to England and Scotland, and the union of the three in one Imperial Parliament. If this arrangement is not yet practicable, we must remain as we are until a favourable opportunity occurs."

Later on he still further modified his attitude towards the question, and joined the "Unionist" ranks.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE JUBILEE YEAR

1887 ; AGE 67-68

**I**N January of this year Mr. White went to Nottingham, and addressed the students of the Theological Institute on "Aggressive Christianity." At the end of the same month he went to Bristol, to speak on behalf of the Colonial Missionary Society. On the first Sunday in February the subject of his lecture to artisans was "The Queen's Jubilee and the Working Classes." The next day he went to Birmingham to preach and speak on behalf of the Midland Baptist Association. Later in the month he preached in Liverpool. In March he was at Worcester preaching on the 200th anniversary of the Church meeting in Angel Street. Thus although his year of office had expired, he was still in request for special occasions.

As ex-Chairman, the Congregational Union also claimed his services as its representative at the meetings of the Scottish Union at Dundee in April. This expedition to Scotland was full of interest to him, for it brought him into contact with both old and new friends. His presence and speeches made an excellent impression upon the Scottish folk. For his speeches he had made careful preparation, and he was rewarded by attentive and appreciative audiences.

The Union meetings were held in Dundee, but Mr. White went first to Glasgow, where he preached twice on the Sunday, April 24th. He was the guest there of his old college friend, Rev. David Russell. On the Monday they went together to Dundee, where Mr. White's first address as delegate of the English Union was delivered on the Tuesday to the students of the Theological Hall, on the "Special Responsibilities of the Ministry." In the evening he was introduced to the meeting of the Union by the Chairman, Mr. Ross, and made a brief reply. On the Thursday evening he addressed a social meeting on the purposes of Church Association, especially that of the formation of personal character, in the promotion of which he feared that the existing Churches were somewhat remiss. On the Friday he gave his lecture on "Wasted Lives," at Ward Chapel, and on Saturday went to Edinburgh. There, on the Sunday, he preached three times—in the morning at Dalry Church, in the afternoon at Free St. George's, and in the evening at Augustine Church.

The more private social engagements which intervened between the public meetings also contributed largely towards making this visit to Scotland very pleasant. Of it he wrote to Rev. W. D. McLaren: "Taking it altogether, it was a great opportunity, and I think prayer was answered by gaining a hearing for two or three principal points. I stuck to my chief texts: (1) St. Paul a fully inspired messenger of God, claiming to be so 186 times in his writings, and proving it by results; (2) The true Gospel, a religion suitable for the wicked, the false Gospel suitable only for respectable people; (3) More danger from Gnosticism inside the Church than from Agnosticism outside; Gnosticism being defined as knowing better than the apostles how to teach Christianity."

In June came the celebration of the Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign, and in the preparations for it Mr. White

took considerable interest. The fact that he was born in the same month, and only a few days earlier than Her Majesty, seemed to give him a rather special and peculiar interest in all that concerned her.

As the ex-Chairman of the Congregational Union, he received a ticket of admission to the Queen's thanksgiving service in Westminster Abbey, of which he was glad to avail himself. This took place on June 21st, the fiftieth anniversary of her proclamation as queen. It was needful to be there two hours before the time of service so as to secure a good place, and there was an immense assembly. Descriptions of the scene and the service were published at the time, and need not be here repeated. Mr. White said that the Queen looked radiant as she entered, that the service was very solemn, real, and pathetic, and that as she returned Her Majesty's face was full of emotion. He got out in time to see the Royal party leave the Abbey, and as they went up Whitehall he heard from St. James's Park the thunder of the people's voice as they acclaimed her, and this he characterized as "a sublime sound, like nothing else in nature."

On the following Sunday he preached on the Mosaic Jubilee, comparing and contrasting it with that of the Queen's reign, and giving a description of the scene that he had witnessed in Westminster Abbey.

On Monday the 27th, along with Dr. Mackennal, who had succeeded him in the Chair of the Congregational Union, he went to Windsor to present to the Queen a congratulatory address from that body. They found themselves in the company of about a hundred men representing fifty societies or other bodies, municipal, religious, and scientific, who were there on a similar errand. Lunch was provided for them on arrival, and after that they were shown into first one ante-room, and then another, until at last they were ushered into the presence of the Queen herself, whom he described as a little old lady in a big widow's cap sitting



behind a table. She sat to receive the municipal representatives, but stood beside the table to receive those of the religious bodies. He spoke of it as having been a momentary entrance, like a magic lantern slide, and exit backwards. Although this was so brief an interview with Her Majesty, it brought him into very close touch with her, and formed one of the bright spots in his memory through the remainder of his life.

By this time the exhaustive effects of Mr. White's great activity and much public speech during the preceding eighteen months was indicated by a persistent insomnia, and it was evident that thorough mental rest was needed. In order to obtain this it was arranged that he should go with his brother and nephew for a trip to the Tyrol and Pontresina. They started at the end of July, and after a brief visit to Innsbrück they went on by railway to Landeck. Thence by the roads along the Alpine valleys and by several stages, they proceeded over the Stelvio Pass to Pontresina. There the large company at the hotel made their sojourn less quiet and restful than would have been desirable for Mr. White; but he regained his faculty of sleep. Sometimes, however, when awake, he would observe the night sky, which made a deep impression upon him, the stars seeming so much brighter and nearer, viewed from so great a height and in overwhelming numbers, so that he could say, "It was worth the whole journey to look upon this 'spacious firmament on high, with all the blue ethereal sky,' a 'back heaven' for the everlasting hills."

From Pontresina they made several excursions: to St. Moritz, to the Roseg and Morteratsch Glaciers, the Schafberg, &c. A stay of eight days was long enough for Edward White, and he persuaded his brother and nephew to move on. Accordingly on August 16th they started on the return journey to England by way of Zürich and Basle.

In a letter that appeared in the *Baptist* of September 15th, Mr. White mentioned four distinct causes of mischief in the Churches at that time. These were—(1) General scepticism promoted by atheistic science and criticism; (2) Small attention paid to connected study of Scripture in colleges; (3) The so-called religious Press, in which much of the writing is done by men who scoff at the apostolic message of eternal judgement and of immediate forgiveness through the atonement of Christ, the message which alone in any real sense can “save sinners”; and (4) The unreasoning, uncritical dogmatism of the school in which Mr. Spurgeon has so many humbler and less worthy imitators. On this last cause he says, “Stiff, immovable, Calvinistic orthodoxy, with its everlasting torment in hell (think of it!) for the non-elect of all ages and of all nations, including youthful sinners, has been widely one provocative cause of prevailing heresy. Men are more deeply influenced by their antipathies than by their sympathies, and I think that this school of evangelical men, notwithstanding all their merits, have much to answer for in the modern reaction towards Universalism (with its washed-out message of general consolation, confounding salvation and damnation under one definition), towards a still wider scepticism, and even towards the abyss of so-called ‘scientific’ atheism. . . . I know very well that Mr. Spurgeon’s stiff backbone has been one secret of his influence for good over the unlearned multitude, but it has also alienated and even wrought up to bitter antagonism multitudes of intelligent men whom, under different treatment, he might have saved from apostasy.”

Such was Mr. White’s judgement on the “Down Grade” controversy, which for a while made a considerable stir in the Free Churches of the land.

At the opening of the session at New College, Mr. White gave the introductory address to the students on October 4th. The subject he had chosen was, “The

Influence of Spiritual States on Biblical Criticism." In it, referring to recent discussions on the Old Testament, he pointed out the growing importance assigned to the spiritual factor, both in determining the value and authority of the Scripture writers themselves, and the weight and authority of the scholars who criticize them. A man who is an eminent Orientalist may lack "the vision and the faculty divine" which would inspire and illuminate his criticism of those writings. This principle is recognized in the Scriptures themselves. He said: "The function of the Church teacher is to furnish a living voice to the records of divine revelation, to be a medium between the sacred historians, prophets, and apostles and the people to whom God has sent His Son as Redeemer and King. But this function of teacher is entangled with a double difficulty, arising out of the surrounding presence of spiritually blind guides; that is, of parties corresponding in character to the old sects of the Pharisees and Sadducees in the days of Christ, namely, the formal traditionary party of religious commentators and practitioners, and its reactionary product, the sceptical and destructive party of critics and thinkers. And just as Christ, the living Word, maintained an independent position between them, and committed Himself to neither, . . . so is it still in relation to the written Word in our own time, when the Pharisaic and Sadducean parties still divide European society between them. Our present danger is undoubtedly chiefly from the influence of the latter. . . . And yet, on the whole, there seems no reason why we should be seriously alarmed. Let us keep our minds cool and honest; let us read diligently and in order that wonderful work the Revised Version of the Old Testament, where you have in English substantially 'the Law and the Prophets' as they were in Christ's time, in which He believed and on which He rested His claim to be the Saviour of the world; and let us 'pray to God alway'

like Cornelius. Then, if spiritual men, we shall, I think soon discover that those great scholars of France, Germany, America, and England are right who maintain that the outcry of triumph on behalf of the Dutchmen and Scotsmen who suppose that they have already nearly made an end of an authentic Pentateuch has been raised somewhat too early in the conflict. . . . The true light dawns again after every eclipse; for though the evils of controversy are great, they are all temporary, while its benefits are all permanent. . . . The business of breaking down and discrediting the Bible as a whole is a far more difficult and complicated undertaking than either its hostile critics or its lukewarm friends sometimes imagine, especially since evangelical scholars have learnt to avoid dangerous exaggerations and to allow for *honest* Biblical compilation and partial editorship. In order to break down the Bible narratives as a whole, you have to deal with a prolonged *spiritual* structure. . . . There is another remarkable circumstance: that the subversive criticism which occupies itself with the Old Testament Judaism seldom employs itself upon apostolic Christianity, and *vice-versâ*, that the scholars who attack the supernatural in Christianity seldom occupy themselves with Judaism. They do not work together as partners ought to do . . . but generally conduct independent critical business in the line of anti-supernaturalistic adventure. Is not this because it seems a much more formidable enterprise to undertake the overthrow of both together than of either singly? . . . But we ought not to despair of the ultimate faith of these eminent writers, because they exhibit a wonderful power of belief, even in their present speculations. Their belief may have taken a wrong form, and may be governed by mistaken principles, but they do believe the most miraculous things as to Jewish and Christian history; and when this believing power of theirs is turned in another direction, they



will probably find little difficulty in accepting the far less exacting phenomena of the old historical Judaism and Christianity. . . . A literary criticism springing from a secret hostility to the supernatural and divine is necessarily fatal to fair dealing with the Bible. The knowledge of God in our own souls is the clue to all beside in nature and grace. Apart from this divine illumination we shall lose our way in the labyrinth of life, and still more in the study of that revelation which alone can guide us into life everlasting." <sup>1</sup>

In October Mr. White attended the meetings of the Congregational Union at Leeds, and in connection therewith went to speak at a meeting held at Dewsbury.

An article was contributed by him in this year to a "Symposium" in the *Homiletic Magazine* on the question: "The Reunion of Christendom: is it desirable, is it possible?" His article followed one by Rev. H. N. Oxenham, M.A., and much of it is devoted to an exposition of some of the fundamental differences which make it quite impossible that there can ever be outward organic union between free evangelical Churches and a system such as the Roman represented by Mr. Oxenham. He goes on to argue thus: "Christianity, as depicted in the apostolic writings, asserts the priesthood of all true believers, all alike having direct access into the Holy of Holies through the great High Priest, but it recognizes no special priesthood in the pastors of the Churches. These are designated presbyters or elders, and bishops or overseers, not once priests. The 'craft' of the 'priest' when practised with a free hand has ever proved fatal to the intellectual, social, and political liberty of Christendom; and the combination of all the 'priesthoods' of Europe into one vast organization would mightily invigorate the pretensions of all, would prepare for us a world where men for their own comfort

<sup>1</sup> This address was published in full in the *Congregational Review* for November 1887.

might as well resolve at once on abandoning their claim to be regarded as rational creatures. They would become the slaves and negroes of a world-wide hierarchy. For the effect of a close combination in widely ruling corporations is to diminish the sense of personal responsibility, and indeed the belief in the value of individual manhood. . . . There is a special delusion which haunts the combinations by which men seek to recover the sense of power and to unite their forces in order to accomplish nominally praiseworthy ends. The delusion consists in mistaking joint responsibility for divided responsibility. The persuasion is widely extended that union is not only strength in administration and enterprise, but that it distributes the oppressive burden of responsibility in equal and insignificant shares between all the persons who are joined together in any government or enterprise ; so that although the practical result of their united action may be morally indefensible or even intensely wicked and injurious, no single person can be justly blamed or rendered accountable for the whole criminality of the result. . . . The truth is that the relation of the individual to the moral government of God is primary, dominant, and inalienable, and cannot be diminished by the evil concurrence of others. Before God the combination of men in counsel and action results always not in divided responsibility but in joint responsibility. . . . The day that beheld the Reunion of Christendom according to Mr. Oxenham's plan, would probably see enthroned an organized mastery of the multitude over the individual, . . . which would first punish and then attempt to extinguish all individuality of thought and practice in religion, so bringing into action the ancient forces of persecution, disciplined and sharpened by the refinements of modern ingenuity and intolerance.

"The really effective security for the liberties of Europe, intellectual, social, and political, the best conceivable defence against the introduction of a Chinese uniformity

in religious thought and a semi-Chinese despotism in administration, I find, not in the reunion, but in the providential divisions and rivalries of what Mr. Oxenham denominates 'Christendom.' . . . With due deference to Mr. Oxenham I deny, with all my fellow Nonconformist Protestants, that the unity for which our blessed Lord besought His Father on the night before His passion, the unity which finds its archetype in the unity of the Godhead, the unity which was largely realized in the apostolic age of the Gospel, the unity through which the world will be brought to believe in the mission of the Son of God, was a unity analogous to the ecclesiastical unity of a Christendom bound together by an organized hierarchy of prelates and priests, having their centre of force at Rome. . . . Can any serious, impartial student of the four Gospels . . . believe that if 'this same Jesus' should appear on earth at this juncture in the world's history, He would as a first reform proceed to bring about a reunion of Christendom after the fashion advocated? . . . No! Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day and for ever. And this encourages the belief that a reunion of Christendom on His lines would be found in some present and practical reality operating in every parish. . . . Let all men who 'love God' in any neighbourhood begin to 'love one another also,' and to show it by an immediate endeavour to realize local union. . . . At all events this result would somewhat resemble early Christianity, with its short creed and its brotherly love. . . . If successful in a single parish, of town or country, it might be repeated in all the parishes of the United Kingdom. But I admit that it is difficult even to imagine what would become of the majority of us who are religious teachers under such a revolution."

A letter published in the *Nonconformist and Independent* in December of this year shows how ready Mr. White was to accept all proved results of recent nature-study, while steadily refusing to admit the unproved assumptions

of nature-students as grounds for disbelief in the Bible. The subject of the letter was "The Influence of Method on Results," and a few extracts may be given: "There are few investigations in which the result attained is not greatly determined by the method. . . . It is so in the pressing question on the modes of divine action in creation as affecting the credibility of the sacred writings. There are two opposite methods of inquiry here which seem to lead men to different results. . . . The first method leads men to commence the induction amidst the mists of the remotest antiquity of the globe in the most distant geologic times, and thence to travel onwards, through successive fossil worlds, until an approach is made to the more recent periods of the earth's history, including finally its existing condition and present inhabitants. Under this method it is, as a matter of fact, possible for speculative science to reach such a conviction of the permanent action of the evolutionary energies of Nature, whether proved or not to be of absolutely universal application, as to lead men to assert the chain of life to be unbroken through all the ages, and to include man in the latest number of its links—links, however, belonging to times immensely more ancient than those represented by either archæology or history. This method of study carries with it usually a denial of any recent creation of either animals or men, and from that denial proceeds a *bouleversement* of the fundamental Scripture histories on which the New Testament writers base Christianity. . . . But there is another method of studying the phenomena set before us in history and in nature, and the pursuit of this method greatly affects the result. Instead of beginning our researches into the modes of divine action only in the primeval world, we begin also at the latter end of the great history of providential action. We study the modern world as we know it, in the whole extent of its inorganic and vital phenomena, this world which is nearest to ourselves and close at hand. And here



we are at once confronted with a wholly new view of divine action, differing from that which meets us in the dim fossil world. Before us we see, indeed, a vast system of gradual and evolutionary processes in full operation, 'ordinances of heaven and earth,' giving us the assurance of certain fixed and permanent methods of divine government in nature and compelling us to accept the belief, from the comparative study of internal structure that what we term evolution has borne a great part in the divine production of living things now existing, and the consequent probable connection at least of many of them with previous forms of life now extinct and fossilized. So that any successful and general attack on the doctrine of development becomes less and less possible for minds duly informed of the facts.

"But—and here is the chief result of the second method—we are confronted, if we study concurrently the modern period of the divine government, with undubitable signs of a divine action which is not gradual and evolutionary, but direct, new-creative, and supernatural. Miraculous Christianity—appearing only twenty long life-times ago—is as much a proved historical phenomenon in recent history as any case of animal evolution can be in the pre-historic world of nature. The history of Jesus Christ and of Christianity, of His death, resurrection, and ascension, and of their spiritual consequences on earth, are as thoroughly well authenticated as any conclusion that can be derived from the study of fossilized Australian marsupials, or of the hipparion in America. But here, whether ungodly scientists recognize it or not, we see at once a *direct supernatural action of God*. Nature cannot be supernatural. The supernatural is in God alone. . . . And thus at once comes into view the double action of a Deity acting in the natural and in the supernatural spheres, the evidence of both being under our eyes. There is a sphere of action for Nature, a sphere of action for Man who is a

true cause, and a sphere of action for Deity. What follows? Clearly, that the Being who has 'created a new thing in the earth' in Christ and Christianity, may also have created new things in the natural world aforesaid; even, as some naturalists say, whole tribes of living creatures in successive worlds; so that He may also have recently 'created man in His own image,' as we read in the record on which Christianity is founded. I am speaking to believers in Christ only.

"In a word, does not the truth lie in a synthesis of the contending theories? Each is partly true. The whole truth requires the seldom-pursued study of the world's history from both ends at once. . . . Is there not something worth thinking about in this way of putting matters?"

Before the close of this year Mr. White had become convinced that the time was at hand when he ought to retire from the pastorate at Hawley Road, which had been the main interest of his life for nearly thirty-six years. Indications of failing powers had appeared, and the strain of so much public work was felt to be too great for continuance. Accordingly, after having mentioned the matter privately to the leading persons in the Church, he announced his intention to the members on Sunday, December 11th. His actual retirement took place in the following year.

## CHAPTER XVI

### RETIREMENT FROM THE PASTORATE

1888-9; AGE 68-70

AT a special meeting of the Church at Hawley Road, which was held on Sunday evening, December 11, 1887, Mr. White read a letter, written by himself to the deacons a short time previously, giving the reasons which impelled him to contemplate his resignation of the pastorate early in the coming year. In that letter he stated that, ever since his year of Chairmanship of the Union, he had felt persuaded that it would be better for the Church that he should terminate his work at Hawley Road before his declining strength should be so marked as to lead to a similar weakening of the community. He wrote: "It is a grave mistake for pastors who have long held the same position in any neighbourhood to postpone this step until the patience of either young or old is exhausted." He stated his resolution therefore to retire from the pastorate early in the coming spring, while there was still plentiful vitality in the Church to provide, with God's blessing, for the future. He then mentioned some further reasons which urged him to this course, and thus concluded: "No words can express the feelings towards you all with which I bring to an end my labours among you. So far as the Church at Hawley Road is

concerned, my life has been one of unbroken happiness. The loving and generous care shown to us by the living, and the memory of the steadfast affection of the dead, touch me more than I can now tell you in writing. My comfort is that, if spared, we shall be comparatively near neighbours, and not lose by distance either society or friendship.

“May the Great Shepherd guide you in the steps which will be required by my withdrawal, and may the old peace and unity continue to the end.”

It was then stated by the deacons that, having fully considered the reasons given for the contemplated resignation, they saw no course open but to accept it. Further consideration of the subject was then adjourned to the regular Church meeting, to be held on the 22nd December.

At that meeting a resolution was moved by Dr. Pye Smith, and seconded by Mr. Mercer, in the following terms :—

“That we, the members of the Church assembling at Hawley Road, desire to render devout thanks to Almighty God for His many mercies, and particularly for having for so many years continued to us the blessing of Mr. White's oversight in the Lord, for the benefit of his public and private prayers, for his preaching of the Gospel of the grace of God, his exposition of the Holy Scriptures, and his Christian character and example.

“That we hereby record our respect and affection to our beloved minister, our deep and universal sorrow that the bond which has long and happily held us together should be broken, and our earnest desire and prayer that the deeper bond of gratitude and love, of our common faith and of our united hope may never be broken, but may grow continually stronger for ever.

“That while praying for every blessing upon him, upon Mrs. White, and on their family, we hope that he may



long be spared to be of eminent service in the Church on earth, that we may from time to time have the privilege of again hearing the Word of Life from his honoured lips, that his last days may be his best days, and that they may be crowned by an abundant entrance into the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ."

After discussion of the possibility of suggested alternatives, which were shown to be impracticable, this resolution was unanimously agreed to.

At the Church meeting held on February 23, 1888, the last at which Mr. White presided as pastor, he read the original declaration signed by the thirty-four earliest members of the Church, and addressed the members on the concluding verses of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians; and prayers were then offered for both pastor and Church in their separation.

A special farewell meeting open to the public was held in the chapel at Hawley Road on March 22, 1888, at which testimony was borne to the high estimation in which Mr. White's life and labours were held, not only by neighbours, and ministers, and representatives of various Christian Churches and religious associations, but also by representatives of science, legislation, and literature. After letters had been read from Dr. Dale, Professor Barrett, and others, the Rev. J. C. Harrison, who presided, spoke of his close intimacy with Mr. White during all the thirty-six years of his pastorate at Hawley Road and his regret at losing him as a neighbour. Dr. Stoughton referred to some of his pleasant associations with Mr. White and his chapel, particularly to one Sunday evening when he saw the place packed with an eager throng of artizans. The Rev. John Nunn, as one of those ministers who had been longest neighbours of Mr. White, was the next to pronounce a valediction. Then followed the special event of the evening.

Mr. Russel Elliot presented Mr. White with an

address signed by about four hundred of his friends, all of whom had subscribed to the presentation about to be made, including not only members of his congregation, but many other admirers in different parts of the country.

Mr. John Carter said that, as one of the oldest members of the Church over which Mr. White had faithfully presided for thirty-six years, he had been requested to perform a very pleasing duty. When Mr. White's resignation became known, a strong desire sprang up in the minds of many present and past members of the Church, and also of those who had read his works with great pleasure and profit, that some tangible evidence should be presented to him of the esteem and affection in which he was held, and especially for his able and faithful exposition of the Scriptures. Consequently a few friends came together, a committee was formed to receive subscriptions, and he was sure it would be gratifying to Mr. White to know that contributions had come not only from members of his Church, but from a large number of ministerial friends and others in London and throughout the country. The result was that in the name of the contributors he had the honour and the very great pleasure of presenting Mr. White with a cheque to the value of £1,000, which he begged him to accept as a token of their love and affection. He had now another pleasing duty to perform. Many of the present and past members of the Church, knowing what a true helpmate Mr. White had in his beloved wife, and knowing the great interest Mrs. White had always taken in everything connected with the Church, had expressed a strong desire that a testimonial should be presented to her also. Knowing Mrs. White's fondness for botany, it had been suggested that a fern-stand would be appreciated, and, acting on that suggestion, one had been obtained, which they begged Mrs. White kindly to accept as a token of their estimation of the valuable work she had done, and they hoped that when

attending to the flowers and ferns it contained Mrs. White would remember the many friends connected with Hawley Road Church. As they were about sorrowfully to bid Mr. White farewell, they were most anxious that he might be assured of their earnest prayers that his future years might be very happy, and that his later days might be his happiest, and that in his last moments on earth he might be cheered and comforted by the prospect of meeting around the throne of God many who had attended his ministry, many loved ones gone before, to spend a glorious eternity with Christ and His redeemed, and hear those welcome words: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Rev. Edward White, who was received with loud and prolonged applause, said it would be easily understood by the meeting that he felt great difficulty in expressing himself. The whole of the meeting and the incidents connected with it had come upon him nearly altogether as a surprise. The loving-kindness which had prepared the meeting had been most ingenious in concealing from him what was going to happen, and whereas at first they had spoken of holding a kind of domestic farewell with each other, it seemed to have been developed into this much wider meeting. He wished first of all to lay at the feet of Him whose presence they all realized at that moment the honour that had been conferred upon His servant. Whatever had been true in the things which had been said by his dear friends concerning the nature, the purpose, and the principles which had animated him in the past was a description of Christ's work through him and in him. They were all members of Christ. He was their Head, and if He was their Head and lived in them, then certain works corresponding with His purpose would show themselves forth in them, and it would be vain presumption not to acknowledge the goodness and love of Christ the Lord in enabling them to do any such work

in His name. That took off the evil side of human praise, which was liable to go to excess if left to itself. Where work had been faithfully and honestly done in spite of all temptation, in constant habit of prayer to Him who was their Righteousness, their Sanctification, their Redemption, and their Eternal Life, it was only honouring their Lord to accept such declaration as part of His praise, and if the praise and love of Christians on earth was so sweet, what would be the word of Christ, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"? Almost all Christian works were works of combination. The Lord did not give much to be done by individual souls. What had been accomplished by them was the result of co-operation, and it was because they had had such help and such marvellous sympathy that they had been able to accomplish some of the work which had been described. It was indeed a most solemn thing for a man to enter on a course of Christian ministry. St. Paul said: "To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?" What a fearful discrimination between the two destinies! What a boundless blessing if they could really believe that their adherence to the divine truth had been so steady and their purpose so honest that they might hope that the influence they had exerted had been, in the main, for human salvation! He could not conceive of any employment more delightful than that which he had been permitted to exercise at Kentish Town for the last thirty-six years. They had had an unbroken history of brotherly love; it had, indeed, been a true Church in the midst of London. There had never been a quarrel between the ministers or between the Churches, and at the end of the time they could look back upon a long course of faith and hope and love. In looking back over his past life he wished to render honour to his first tutor, Mr. Charles Nice



Davies. To him he owed the habit of sitting down daily to study the Holy Scriptures. They used to sit down every morning to study the Greek Testament, and Mr. Davies fastened in his mind a habit which he had never lost ; he had always tried to understand the Holy Scriptures for himself, and he had always tried to convey to others that which had thus been conveyed to himself. If any good had come to others in consequence of that habit, he thought Mr. Davies's name ought to be mentioned. His soul now rested with Christ, and for him was reserved the peace which passeth all understanding in the everlasting kingdom. The result of Scriptural study had been immensely to strengthen in his own mind perfect confidence in what were understood as the old foundations of the evangelical faith. That had been the keynote of his teaching at Hawley Road—forgiveness first, amendment afterwards. With regard to the kind and most generous munificence of the presentation which Mr. Carter had made in the name of so many friends, he scarcely knew what to say, as it was the last thing which entered into his thoughts. He could sum it all up in one word : “From my heart, my friends, I thank you.” He could not help thinking of those ministers who reached old age without any presentation of any shape or form awaiting them, and he hoped, by means of the munificent gift which he had just received, to be able to help some of his older brethren in a more obscure position in life. As for the results of his labours, it was indeed an unspeakable delight to be able to think that he had helped in some degree the faith of mankind, and, he hoped, promoted the salvation of many. Christianity was opposed by two kinds of unbelievers. There were those who were opposed to Christianity when it was pure, because they were opposed to the Author of Christianity. But there were also those who were sceptics and doubters in consequence of the corruption of Christianity, and it was a comfort to think

that he had helped some of these to take such a view of Christianity as to enable them to reconcile faith in the Lord Jesus Christ with scientific knowledge and with those wider views which had grown up in the world in modern times. His earnest hope was, that of the multitudes of educated men who were giving themselves to the Christian ministry, it would please God to lift up a few of them in the character of expositors of the divine Word. If they could clear Christianity of its corruption there was no rational scepticism that could stand against it. Christ was greater than any sceptic, and if they did but present their Lord to the world as He should be presented, there was something so wonderful, so loving, in Him that He was able to vanquish even the utmost hostility of those who were opposed to Him. He was thankful to say that at Kensington, where he was going for the next fifteen months, he should be amongst old friends. The presence of so many honoured men on the platform overwhelmed him, and he could only say that he wished everybody to accept the warmest thanks of himself and Mrs. White for the kindness that had been shown to them.

The subsequent speakers were the Rev. D. Basil Martin, who acknowledged his great indebtedness to Mr. White, whose assistant he had been for more than two years; Professor Sir George G. Stokes, Bart., F.R.S., M.P., who recognized and reciprocated Mr. White's catholicity; the Rev. T. McDougall Mundle, who read a resolution of regret and appreciation passed by his Church in Kentish Town; the Rev. Samuel Minton-Senhouse, M.A., a close friend and comrade of Mr. White while himself in the ministry of the Church of England; the Rev. Dr. Hannay, who represented the Congregational Union; Mr. Samuel Smith, M.P.; the Rev. Newman Hall, who had only just arrived from Mentone and had travelled day and night in order to be present; the Rev. Robert Harley, F.R.S.; Mr. Thomas Walker; and the Rev. George Hawker.

The following hymn, composed by Mr. White, was sung at this farewell meeting :—

Offspring of God, we boast the name ;  
To God let all our voices rise,  
With holy joy the praise proclaim  
Of our great Father in the skies.

The glory of the burning dawn,  
The purple evening's softer ray,  
By His command foretells the morn,  
With peaceful gladness crowns the day.

Above this vast revolving world  
The heavens unfold their midnight scroll ;  
Millions of orbs in courses hurled,  
Through deep unbroken silence roll.

The movements of the universe  
Depend on His controlling hand,  
And wide from age to age rehearse  
His awful name in every land.

His calm, eternal eye surveys  
All things in one unchanging view,  
Each creature lives beneath the gaze  
Of "Him with whom we have to do."

Yet wonders still on wonders rise ;  
The heavens are bright, the earth is fair,  
But, far more wondrous in our eyes,  
This mighty God, He heareth prayer !

Through Christ, our Life, upon the throne  
To Him may mortal sinners go ;  
His death doth for our guilt atone,  
And life in endless joy bestow.

Writing to Mr. Knight a few days after this meeting, Mr. White said : " Amidst the tumult of last Thursday evening I really do not think we exchanged five words, but you will know what I feel for your share in the celebration of the farewell. I could not help thinking how glad the first teachers of Christianity would have been to have so good a time, instead of being kicked and stoned to the last moment of their lives. But the pleasure, though

mainly ours, must have been shared by those who have stood by me so long as you have done. It was very striking to picture to myself the little band of 'heretics' who gathered on the same spot thirty-six years ago, few in number and small in resources, in contrast with the end of the battle; and for how many years did you take an effectual part in it. Well, you know how we love you both, and have reason to. It was a new sensation to be stroked the right way of the stuff for two hours without stopping; till at last I felt as if it would be only right to let loose the *Christian World* or some other less partial friend to do the other thing. However, it is over now, and may God keep us steady, in good report as in evil."

On the 31st March he wrote in the following terms to the Church at Hawley Road:—

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,—I have been glad to hear that the usual financial meeting is to be held on Thursday week, because it will offer me a suitable opportunity of saying to you a little more of what is in my heart than was possible amidst the excitement and surprise of the 22nd March. I have felt ever since how miserably I failed on that evening to express in any adequate way the astonishment and gratitude which I felt at the parting festival of love which you had prepared for us; the like of which has not often been seen in our Churches. It was a good thing for both you and me that we could so part, a good thing for Nonconformity, and a good thing for Christianity, in our neighbourhood and in London; and we both alike owe it to the 'kindness of God our Saviour,' who has taught us to love one another with sincerity and truth, and to respect one another as well.

"But what shall I say of the most munificent gift, which embodied and expressed in a practical form your care for our future? I thank you for it with true affection, one and all, richer and poorer, and the feeling which it expressed is



of more value than the money. I did not wish, in leaving Hawley Road, to be any expense to you after last Christmas, but you have overpowered my desire by your kindness, and have by an immense amount of loving labour on the part of some of you drawn others into the business of sending us away laden and honoured with many honours, like St. Paul from Melita.

"Well, our love has been the growth of many years and, if we may judge by its lasting on earth, bids fair to be eternal. While listening to my own praise from men, I kept steadily before my mind the thought of the one all-seeing Judge, who knows both sides of our characters ; and yet, though He could not have spoken without saying ' I have somewhat against thee,' I think He knows that my aims have been right and the love to you sincere. The affection I have received from you can never be repeated elsewhere on earth, both from old and young ; but what is best to think of is that this affection is of a moral as well as a personal value and will help us to keep our faces directed to the eternal City of God, where we hope to spend together the endless days.

"I cannot close this letter without saying, (1) How delighted I was that you joined my dear wife in your testimony of affection and how much she feels your kindness ; and (2) How thankful I was to receive your gifts and addresses through the lips of Mr. Carter and Mr. Russel Elliot, who in their two generations have been to me such helpers and friends as I only wish every minister of Christ possessed throughout the world. May God bless them and bless you all in both worlds and for ever and ever. For my wife and children, who all wish to join in these words of affection to you, I am, dear friends, ever gratefully and affectionately yours,

"EDWARD WHITE."

In November 1887 Mr. White had preached at the chapel

in Allen Street, Kensington, which had been the scene of the ministry of Dr. Stoughton and Dr. Raleigh, the Church there being at that time without a pastor. When the approaching retirement of the pastor at Hawley Road became known, and it was understood that he would be open to occasional preaching engagements, the Church at Kensington decided to give two invitations: first, to invite Mr. C. Silvester Horne, then studying at Oxford, to become pastor at the close of his term of study; and second, to invite Mr. White to take the temporary oversight for about a year and a half, preaching there generally on the Sundays, except when Mr. Horne could occupy the pulpit. This invitation reached Mr. White on January 6th, and on the 12th he wrote agreeing to the proposal, undertaking to help the Church to the best of his power, but giving warning that his occasional exhibitions of vigour must not be taken as the measure of his strength.

Feeling the necessity of having a dwelling-place within easy reach, he arranged to take a house in Holland Road for the limited period of the engagement, and moved into it in the course of March. His house in Tufnell Park he soon afterwards sold. He still, however, had the house at Highwood Hill, and to this he retired for quiet and refreshment as often as he conveniently could.

The last Sunday in February had marked the end of his Hawley Road pastorate, and on that occasion there were large congregations, many who had formerly been connected with the Church being present. The Kensington engagement began with the first Sunday in April, and so he had the month of March free. This freedom was welcome, for the business of clearing out of a house of that size after twenty-two years' residence is not easily or quickly accomplished, especially with so large a number of books to be classified and packed, some for Kensington and some for Highwood.

In writing from Kensington in the month of June to the

Very Rev. Paton J. Gloag, D.D., LL.D., of Edinburgh, he gave the following account of these events : "I brought my ministry in Kentish Town to an end in March, after thirty-six years, making with ten years at Hereford forty-six years, and intending to adjourn to Highwood to spend the rest of my time in writing and occasional preaching. But just at this juncture our great Church at Kensington wanted a 'stated supply' for fifteen months, until Mr. Horne is ready at Oxford. So I came here, engaged in preaching to a very interesting congregation, and have taken a house for a space of time, which gives us much opportunity of visiting museums, &c."

On the evening next following that of the farewell and presentation at Hawley Road, a meeting of the opposite character was held at Kensington, at which there was a public recognition and welcome accorded to both Mr. C. S. Horne, as the pastor elect, and to Mr. White as the "stated supply" or interim pastor. Dr. Stoughton, who had been one of the speakers the previous evening at Hawley Road, was a most fitting chairman on this occasion, he having been for many years pastor of that Church, and the chapel in which the meeting took place having been erected during his pastorate.

After the opening prayer Dr. Stoughton said they had present that evening, so to speak, the past, present, and future tenses of the verb "to minister." He himself represented the past, for it must be something like forty-five years ago that he entered upon a pastorate there that lasted thirty-three years. He was glad that Mr. White was to be one of his successors. He remembered years ago receiving a letter from a daughter of Dr. Redford in which she said : "We have got such an interesting young man here, and he is studying for the ministry. He reminds us so much of you." That young man was Mr. White. He highly approved of a minister doing what Mr. White was about to do : leaving the settled ministry while he still

has health and strength remaining, and becoming a sort of bishop at large ; and he felt sure that while at Kensington Mr. White would gain great favour and do excellent service, as an expositor of the Scriptures and lecturer to working men.

Mr. Thomas Walker, one of the deacons, welcomed Mr. White to the pastorate, and congratulated the congregation on the satisfactory settlement of the difficulties attending the vacancy. They proposed now to gather up their resources, and to travel on the old, well known, well trodden and divinely appointed road, trusting in the guidance and protection of the Almighty. The great guarantee for the future was the preserving grace of God, but in their case they had, on the human side, additional guarantees in the men they had chosen to be their teachers. After referring to the high testimony given at Hawley Road on the previous evening to Mr. White's faithfulness, he said that although objection might be taken to Mr. Horne's youth, that was a defect that would constantly tend to disappear.

Mr. White then spoke briefly of his desires and intentions in undertaking thus to stand where so many eminent preachers had stood. He cared less and less to preach intellectual sermons, and preferred to appeal to the moral faculties and the affections.

Mr. Horne then expressed his hearty gratitude for the kind simplicity of the welcome accorded to him and his satisfaction in being thus associated in work with Mr. White.

Although in these two meetings there was such a consensus of appreciation of Mr. White's long ministry, the prejudice against him and his teaching was not even then extinct. Of this there was evidence at the meeting in May of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews. Mr. White delivered an admirable speech, which was received with loud and general



cheers. Yet one person got up and asked an offensive question with reference to what he called Mr. White's specialities.

At the meeting of the Christian Evidence Society in the same month Mr. White was one of the speakers. Referring to the objections against Christianity with which the Society had to deal, he said that some were caused by the theological and ecclesiastical corruptions and hostile speculations of the past eighteen centuries, but that it makes way in spite of them, mentioning his own experience in the north-west of London in confirmation of that assertion. That which moves the common people in our day, as it did in the first days of the Gospel, is the "secret" of Jesus Christ, the message of immediate forgiveness for sinners, which will lead to reformation of life. The sense of sin is the very clue to Christianity.

Mr. Henry Richard, M.P., was at this time residing in Kensington and a member of Mr. White's congregation. The relations between these two men were most cordial, notwithstanding their opposition in the controversy as to the use of force by the State. On June 26th Mr. Richard was announced as "at home," and Mr. White was one of the guests. But this connection did not last long, for on August 20th Mr. Richard died. The funeral took place at Abney Park on the 24th, when Mr. White and Dr. Dale conducted the service, and Dr. Evans addressed the crowd in Welsh. Mr. White referred to that crowd as "a wonderful assembly of men engaged in the wars of the Lord, a sea of fine faces." At the morning service on September 2nd he preached a memorial sermon, in which he urged the duty of Christian men taking their part, as Mr. Richard had done, in political life in order to fight against evil and bring about the triumph of justice and good will in the laws and in the government of their country.

In September a trip to Ireland with Mrs. White was undertaken. Having heard glowing accounts of

the scenery of the west coast, they determined to go thither. Accordingly, after a day spent in seeing Dublin, they travelled across Ireland to Westport. The day of their arrival was unfortunately a fair day, so that the streets were encumbered with cattle and people, and the number and variety of noises increased their discomfort. They therefore soon quitted Westport, and went by railway to Ballina, where a Sunday was spent. On the Monday they made an early start by mail car, and reached Sligo at midday, where they had a row on the lovely Lake Gill, proceeding later in the afternoon by car to Bundoran at the end of Lough Erne, arriving at six, the whole day's journey by car being fifty-nine miles. From the heights above the town the next morning there was a fine view of Donegal Bay, with its vast circle of headlands, and opening out into the Atlantic. Thence by railway to Londonderry in the afternoon; and the following afternoon to Coleraine and Portrush, going on from Bush Mills by the electric railway to the Giant's Causeway Hotel. The Causeway was visited next morning after breakfast, and a seat enjoyed at the airy extremity open to the Atlantic breezes. The afternoon was occupied in a walk over the hills to Pigskin Promontory, whence there was a fine view, lighted up by the western sun. Early the following morning they started for a long drive by the coast to Cushendall, where they spent that afternoon and the morning of the next day. Of the scene as viewed in that morning's walk, Mr. White made the following notes: "Bright morning. Wide and magnificent view of sea and mountains from the top. Promontories on the north stretching out one after another into the ocean; Sheep's Island in the mid-distance, looking through iron gates. Wonderful picture of sea and sky. Two descending headlands enclosed the immense stretch of water, the long length of sea deep blue, shading off in the south into sunlit water and paling towards the coast. The

bright emerald fields and yellow corn on the promontories set off the blue water. The sky a pure pale blue above, flecked near horizon with a ledge of white mountain-like clouds." In the afternoon they had another long coast drive to Larne, and then the railway took them to Belfast for the Sunday, September 30th. There Mr. White preached in the evening for Mr. Fordyce, whose guests they were for three days.

During this visit to Ireland Mr. White had much conversation with people of various ranks and classes on the state and needs of the country. In the west he found the farmers prosperous, having the best harvest for many years. One farmer told him that the grievance of the people is in their tenancies, but that they would strive for Home Rule if purchase were granted. He thought the Government should become landlord, and forbid non-residence, or affix penal consequences. The latter part of the journey being in Ulster, opinion was different, the religious aspect of the question became more prominent, and the distinctively Protestant views were put before the travellers. One car driver said that the peasantry drive away the landlords by their conduct, and then complain of absentee landlords. Ministers who were met in Belfast were all ready for some sort of Home Rule, but none for subjecting Ulster to the Nationalists! On the whole, the experiences gained during the journey tended towards the severance of Mr. White from the party that followed Mr. Gladstone's lead on that subject, a severance which became definite in the following year.

Leaving Belfast on October 4th, they went by steamer to Liverpool, where they were entertained by Mr. Samuel Smith, M.P., and on the 6th they went on to Manchester, where Mr. White preached twice for Dr. Maclaren. They then went to Nottingham, in which town the Congregational Union meetings were held that week. There Mr. White joined in a protest against holding a meeting in connection with the Union on Home Rule for Ireland.

At this time Mr. Samuel Carter Hall was residing in Kensington; he had attained a great age, nearly ninety, and had outlived his wife, who was equally well known in the literary world. In response to inquiry, Mr. White received from him a note, written in a very shaky hand, as follows:—

“REV. AND DEAR SIR,—I have not much physical strength left, but please God I shall have enough to receive you any day about one o’clock or a little before.

“I do not often leave my bed, but am praying for the ‘removal’ that will bring my beloved wife to greet me at the golden gate.

“Truly and faithfully yours,  
“S. C. HALL.”

This note was received on February 4, 1889, and Mr. White promptly called upon the writer. He found him in bed, propped up, being so weak, but a grand old man, with a fine face, flowing white hair, and white eyebrows, in full possession of his faculties, and expressing himself in a noble and deliberate strain of dignified speech, with an occasional touch of poetic thrill. He spoke first of his “hobby,” which was concern for the work of the sisters of St. Claire at Kenmare, who wholly educate and partially feed and clothe four hundred poor children. To these Mr. Hall had sent every month for eight years a box of clothes, towards which he asked for a contribution in exchange for several cards on which pieces of his poetry were printed. This Mr. White very willingly sent. He also called again a fortnight later, when the talk was chiefly about spirit manifestations, of which Mr. Hall had much experience. On looking through a book in which many supposed communications from Mr. Hall’s dead wife were recorded, Mr. White noted that there was nothing in them at all resembling the heaven of Jesus Christ, nothing which a lying *daimonion* could not accomplish.



In this same month of February two letters from Mr. White were published in the weekly Press. Of these the first was addressed to the editor of the *British Weekly*, and was as follows :—

“SIR,—Allow me to offer a respectful remonstrance against your proposal to elicit opinions on the subject of future punishment, at least on the basis indicated in your last number. I do not think that any persons who really understand the doctrine of Life in Christ will consent to a competitive examination for popularity in relation to the single topic of the final doom of unregenerate men. The doctrine of Life in Christ is not primarily, or even secondarily, a doctrine on hell. It is a doctrine on the nature of man, on the object of the divine Incarnation, and on its effects in the case of the saved. It is only in the last place a doctrine on the final destiny of the unsaved. When treated simply as a scheme for getting rid of the later patristic and mediæval doctrine of endless torments, I have never seen the slightest benefit of a spiritual kind resulting from its adoption. It is only when embraced as a system of evangelical theology, resulting from a scientific and common-sense method of Scripture exegesis, a system which places the idea of eternal life as a gift of grace in the centre of Christianity, that any good spiritual results ensue. And since a connected study of Holy Scripture is just the very last thing to which present tastes incline the religious public, those who hold this system of belief as of divine authority are in no way shaken in their faith by the opinion of the multitudes who accept either the natural immortality of all men, from philosophy or tradition, or the salvation of all men, from speculative philanthropy or religious agnosticism.”

This letter may serve as an illustration of the great difficulty there has always been in getting preachers or

writers or editors to understand the full and true scope of the doctrine, and to treat it from the positive side as a doctrine of life, and not as a doctrine of doom.

The second letter, of which a portion follows, was on a different subject, one which Mr. White had before treated in a sermon at Penmaenmawr in 1878, as mentioned in Chapter X. This letter appeared in the *Spectator*, and so brought the question before a different and perhaps wider public than that which the sermon had reached :—

“SIR,—Many of your readers will thank you for the timely support given in your article in the *Spectator* of February 16th on ‘The Sternness of Christ,’ to the true doctrine as to the impression made by Christ’s character on the people of Palestine. I venture to offer two additional items of evidence on the same side.

“‘It was said of some that Elias had appeared.’ If Jesus had been in appearance and manner the ‘weak creature’ which a very eminent sceptic, often mentioned in your columns, sometimes declares Him to have been—the true original of the low-browed, thorn crowned, passive Christs of mediæval and ecclesiastical art—is it conceivable that the common people of Galilee could have mistaken Him for the promised Elijah who had been, so to speak, an incarnate thunderstorm in the days of Ahab and Jezebel? There must have appeared, at least often, a mysterious mingling of the awful and terrible with the compassionate and loving in Jesus Christ.

“The close friendship, again, into which our Lord drew the Apostle John seems to me to point in the same direction. This apostle of love, as he is called in many pulpits, was at least by nature a Son of Thunder, though sometimes, as in the case of the Samaritan villagers, mistaken in the proposed aim of his thunderbolts. His Gospel and Epistles, not to speak of the Apocalypse, are full of signs of a most robust and severe moral disposition.

No one employs more terrible denunciations in enforcing the doctrine of 'love.' St. Peter was a Fénelon in comparison. Nevertheless this Son of Thunder was 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.' Was it not a case of the attraction of similars?—of that similarity which consisted in the noble and rare conjunction of manly religious strength and womanly tenderness, the strength which can contend for righteousness even unto death and judgement, and the tenderness which melts into sympathy in the presence of sin and sorrow? How should it be otherwise if this Wonderful One truly was an incarnation of Deity—of that Being who is at once the 'great and terrible God,' yet 'full of compassion and merciful,' the God both of Nature and of Revelation?"

At the Memorial Hall on March 25th a meeting was held to welcome Dr. Hannay and Mr. Lee on their return from South Australia, where they had been visiting the Churches. Mr. White was there to join in the welcome. A misleading paragraph relating to some statements made in Australia as to opinion in England having been published, Dr. Hannay took this opportunity of explaining what he had really said. Among other things in his speech he said: "I did say that the old doctrine of eternal material torment of the impenitent was dead, and had been dead for some time. I said that part of the ground formerly occupied by that doctrine—that is to say, part of the area of conviction which that doctrine had at one time covered—was now divided between two active schools of thought, which had presented to the candour of their countrymen more or less distinctly formulated doctrines. I named first the doctrine of 'conditional immortality,' immortality in Christ, through the life eternal of Christ within the man; and then the doctrine of 'the larger hope,' which I asked them, on the testimony of some of those whose minds have found rest in this doctrine, to distinguish from dogmatic Universalism. These two forms, I said, divided part of the

area of conviction formerly held by the old doctrine. I said that the former of these two doctrines, that of conditional immortality, was maintained by some of our foremost men—foremost whether regard were had to their power as theological thinkers, their eloquence, their literary capacity, or their fidelity as Christian ministers; but that the doctrine of the larger hope had vogue chiefly among the younger men. I made no hint as to the extent of that vogue. . . . Then there was a third category of which I always spoke on those occasions, to which no reference whatever is made in this paragraph—a non-dogmatic category to which no dogmatic designation can be applied, in which are to be placed the names of men, not a few who refuse to dogmatize on this awful subject. . . . And I venture to believe, though I am not confident that I said it there, I proclaim it now as my belief from my knowledge of the English Congregational ministry that under this non-dogmatic category there will be found a much larger body of men who are actively engaged in the pastorate of the Churches than under the head of either of the other schools.”

On this statement Mr. White made the following remarks in a letter to the *Nonconformist and Independent*: “I venture to suggest, from some considerable acquaintance with this special controversy, that nothing can be more misleading than the attempt to decide doubtful minds by vague assertions respecting the proportion of thinkers, or non-thinkers, who hold opinions on any side of this question—a question which cannot and ought not to be decided by such considerations, but only by careful study of the divine revelation which was given for the purpose of making us ‘know the certainty of the things in which we are instructed.’ If the palm of pre-eminent wisdom is to be assigned vaguely to indecision on the question of human destiny, the same reward may be



pleaded for uncertainty, and even for popular or learned indifference, on the questions of the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the work of the Holy Spirit. It is only when Holy Scripture has been carefully, fully, and fairly examined, under the laws of a scientific and common-sense exegesis, that men are entitled to say: 'We cannot tell.'"

Mr. John Bright's death on March 25th gave occasion for special reference to him, to his character as well as his career, in Mr. White's sermon the following Sunday morning.

On the question of Home Rule for Ireland it has been already shown that Mr. White was gradually attaining the conviction that under existing circumstances it was impracticable. A meeting of Nonconformists opposed to Mr. Gladstone's proposals was held at Willis's Rooms on May 8th, and Mr. White showed his sympathy with them by his presence. This led to the appearance in the *Daily News* of May 14th of the following letter, giving his reasons for thus acting:—

"SIR,—As you thought it worth while to notice my attendance at the Nonconformist Unionist meeting last week, perhaps you will permit me, as a thirty years' reader of the *Daily News*, to assign in a few words the reason which persuaded me, and probably many others, into what you consider a state of political backsliding. It has not been, I think, any decay of zeal for the main objects of the Liberal party, or any loss of respect and gratitude for the past achievements of the illustrious Liberal leader. I cannot join in the unworthy reproaches against him in which some of his old followers freely indulge. At the last election, considering the ancient wrongs of Ireland and its pitiful condition, I worked and voted for Mr. Gladstone; hoping that he would, on reflection, see his way to a plan of the Irish political

campaign more acceptable than that which Parliament had condemned—perhaps through some proposed combination with the Conservative leaders similar to that which carried us through the question of the franchise. These expectations have not been fulfilled; we have enjoyed the benefit of two years of elaborate and incessant discussion; and the Liberal party is still, so far as I can see, without a definite and declared policy for Ireland beyond that which is contained in the vague phrase of Home Rule. Mr. Gladstone's followers maintained at the last election that his first Bill was 'dead.' Mr. Gladstone himself in a recent letter speaks of the statement that he was without a definite policy as an 'impudent falsehood.' If this be the state of the case, why does he not assist his old friends and faithful followers to some chance of maintaining their position in argument with their opponents? On my own mind the effect of wide and, I think, impartial reading on both sides since the last election has been to force the conclusion that, whether the Irish members are retained at Westminster or excluded from the Imperial Parliament, the idea of a nearly independent Irish Legislature is impracticable and inconsistent with the primary rights of either Great Britain or Ireland. If the Irish members may hold a powerful, and often a decisive, position in the British Parliament, while we are excluded from theirs; or, if the Irish people are excluded from a voice in Imperial affairs in our Parliament, while we fetter their liberty with the restrictions of Mr. Gladstone's rejected proposals, 'how is the Queen's Government to be carried on,' or, indeed, any Government? At present we are totally in the dark on this crucial and cardinal question, and until Mr. Gladstone furnishes us with some valid reply to the Unionist objection on this matter, as set forth by his old friends and fellow-soldiers, Mr. Bright, Lord Hartington, Lord Derby, Lord Selborne, the Duke of Argyll, Mr. Goschen, and Mr. Chamberlain

(to say nothing of such important journals as the *Spectator*), I see no reason for following Mr. Gladstone blindfold; and, still less, no reason for sacrificing one's honesty and self-respect to the insulting clamour of those pseudo-Liberals who attempt to drown all serious discussion by cries of 'Pigotry' and 'Toryism' against men who were steady Liberals before they were born and have suffered for their faith and practice. These were my chief reasons for attending at the soirée of the Nonconformist Unionists. I do not like the title, for Nonconformity, as such, has nothing to do with the question. The excuse, however, is that the general Nonconformist name has been too freely used in the Congregational Union, as elsewhere, by some 'eminent ministers,' willing to follow even a leader who steadily refuses to lay down a definite and declared policy on the relations of the two proposed Parliaments of England and Ireland, so that Nonconformist remonstrants have a right to a separate hearing. For my part, notwithstanding my friend Mr. Edward Crossley's statement last year in the Congregational Union to the effect that Unionists have ceased to be Liberals, I will not any longer follow even Mr. Gladstone in the dark, because one does not understand Liberal politics to be based, like Popery, on blind, implicit faith in party wire-pullers.

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"EDWARD WHITE.

"52, Holland Road, Kensington, W."

In this month he attended the annual meeting of the London Missionary Society on the 9th; and on the 10th he spoke at the breakfast meeting of the Zenana Mission on the influence of women, who are taking a greatly increased part in the work of evangelization, and the need for making the theology taught more like the glad tidings that it should be.

With respect to his ministry at Kensington, Mr. White's

own experience, as described in a letter to an intimate friend, was that it had proved more of a spiritual work than he had expected. He felt that he had won the attention of the people to his exposition of the Scriptures, and was determined, as long as his service there continued, to do his best to intensify this effect. In a later letter he writes: "The warmth with which people here have welcomed my endeavours has surprised us. But really they do seem grateful for the set of explanations of Scripture which I have set before them. Horne returns from sea-voyaging in the beginning of October, and at once commences."

His stated ministry in this Church had lasted longer than was at first intended, and did not terminate until the end of September in this year. His last sermons as its pastor were preached on September 29th, that in the morning on "The Church as the organ of the Holy Spirit for saving men," that in the evening on "The Eternal Glory."

On the following Thursday a farewell meeting was held. Of that meeting his old friend Mr. James Waylen, who was present, wrote as follows: "Mr. White received the Church's parting salutation and thanks. Cordially as the document embodying this record was worded, we have reason to think it but very imperfectly represents the gratitude to Almighty God which has been kindled in many breasts, for the light and lustre poured on the written Word by the preacher's honest and fearless exegesis. Systematically avoiding any of the catchwords at which party spirit is so apt to take fire, Mr. White has, nevertheless, given utterance to those central truths which pulpit-policy seems doomed to ignore. This he accomplishes by making the Bible speak for itself—by a skilful method of casting his argumentative definitions in Biblical phraseology, linked in sequential order, and issuing in victorious affirmation. Thus the people, before they are aware, are enlisted in the good cause; thankful to discover that their old



Gospel only needed to be unveiled to flash into the radiance of a new revelation. The congregation at Allen Street contains many independent thinkers; but, with hardly anything that may be termed exceptional, all have bowed to the supremacy of Scripture; and not a jarring note has been heard to qualify the affectionate verdict which crowned this very happy period of Church life."

A fortnight later Mr. White presided at the formal Ordination of Mr. C. Silvester Horne, M.A., and in concluding his address, wherein he had explained the significance of the service, he said: "With this evening my own brief but happy function as interim pastor of this Church ceases; and in delivering up this sacred office I shall humbly join my prayers with yours for God's best blessings to rest on my dear successor and on yourselves, whom he will love the more the longer he lives among you and the more self-denyingly he serves you."

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE WORK OF DECLINING YEARS

1889-1894 ; AGE 70-74

MR. WHITE'S idea of what retirement from the pastorate should mean may be gathered from notes written at a later period as well as from his own actual mode of life after the close of his term of office at Kensington. Thus in 1896, after quoting the words, "They shall still bring forth fruit in old age," he wrote: "When retired from regular work in a system of labour, there is great danger of sinking into a desultory, unsystematic, unprofitable working with the left hand, not earnestly, specially when village life (and its small population) is added to the temptation of sloth. Both study and work lose their motive and impulse, and we become doubly unprofitable servants, and unable to respond to the summons: 'Give an account of thy stewardship.'"

Later again, after quoting the two phrases: "Entered into rest," and "They rest from their labours," he wrote: "When retirement from a pastorate and post of continual teaching is taken to mean a life of idleness and cessation from all plans and details of spiritual and temporal usefulness, it only shows the worthlessness of the previous 'active life,' and the quality of the 'restful' change to be sloth. If the devil can persuade you to substitute a life of reading and dreaming for one of active work in saving

others, he must look with delight in both his fiery eyes at the exposure of such hypocrisy. Let the time of retirement from a fixed public work be a time of special watchfulness for the opening of great and effectual doors in other directions."

He had nearly nine years of retirement in which to put his principles into practice, as he did, preaching very frequently, and often with great power, continuing his Merchants' Lectures until 1893, when illness compelled him to resign; writing a good deal both for private and public use; and conversing with friends and with strangers, into whose company he was brought. Very soon after his retirement, however, he was for nearly five months debarred from all public work by illness.

The term for which he had taken the house at Kensington had expired before the close of the temporary pastorate. As he wrote in July to Mr. Knight: "Our brief career here is coming to an end. We leave this house at the end of August. I preach as a traveller one month more (September) and then! final casting off the harness and escape from the shafts; all work to be thenceforth irregular and spasmodic. It *will* feel queer. The plan is to go to Mill Hill till January, and then as February opens to go to Italy for perhaps four months." That projected trip to Italy was, however, never taken, for within a month of his farewell meeting he was so ill as to be obliged to give up all idea of so long a journey.

At the end of October he received from America a volume of essays on the Life after Death, entitled, *That Unknown Country*, to which he had contributed a careful statement of his own belief, founded on Holy Scripture. The separate essays in the volume being arranged in the alphabetical order of the contributors' names, Mr. White's appeared last in the book; and as the first was by Dr. Lyman Abbott, the Conditionalist view is stated both at the beginning and at the end of the series, as well as in

several of the intervening essays, which are of very various character—Unitarian, Mahommedan, Buddhist, &c., as well as orthodox Christian. This large and expensively got-up book was issued only to subscribers, and not published for sale. Mr. White's note on it is: "My contribution, the last in the series, reads like a summing-up of the preceding anti-Scriptural jangle of opinions. Read much of it. Never so glad that my name begins with a 'W' and so comes at the end."

Mansfield College, Oxford, was opened on October 14th, and Mr. White went to the opening ceremony, staying until the next day to hear Dr. Fairbairn's inaugural lecture. After the luncheon he returned home, feeling unwell. On Sunday, November 3rd, he preached in the morning at New College Chapel, and in the evening, at Highgate, gave his lecture on "Athens, Rome, and Jerusalem." But in the afternoon he went to see Dr. Andrews at Hampstead, who examined him thoroughly, and pronounced his condition so serious that it made the patient realize the possible nearness of the end. The doctor gave directions as to warmth and diet, and the avoidance of all chills. After a few days of this regimen, a consultation was arranged with a specialist, the result of which was, as Mr. White expressed it, a strange relief from sentence of death by the verdict of two doctors, the most serious symptoms having become much less marked. Thus he was able to fulfil an engagement to lecture at Harecourt Chapel on the 14th, on "Number in Nature." Continuing the prescribed regimen, he was pronounced "much better" when he went for examination again at the latter end of January 1890. On the 29th of that month he went with Mrs. White and his two youngest daughters to Bournemouth instead of to Italy. Their stay at Bournemouth lasted until the middle of April.

At this time, before leaving home, while still under the impression of impending death, he wrote: "Just as you are



going out of the world you begin to observe it carefully. Never before have I so enjoyed the veined outlines of the bare trees against the sky, and the prospect, as I have done this year, each tree a variety of branching and twigging."

Meanwhile an event had occurred which was of deep interest to him. On December 13, 1889, Robert Browning died at Venice. His remains were brought to England, and on the last day of the year were interred in Westminster Abbey. Accounts of the impressive scene and service there could not be read by Mr. White with indifference, as he always retained a vivid remembrance of the days when they were both boys, though Browning was some years his senior.

During this stay at Bournemouth Mr. White read a great deal, but did scarcely any public work. One Sunday in March he preached for Mr. Ossian Davies. The weather was frequently cold, but he was able to be out in the air a great deal, often sitting on the pier, and gradually regaining vigour. Among the interesting persons whom he met there was Mr. John Macgregor (Rob Roy), with whom he conversed more than once in his walks. He also met some who expressed their thanks to him for his books, especially his chief work, *Life in Christ*. One of the books that he there read was a new translation of the celebrated treatise by St. Athanasius, *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei*, recently published by the Religious Tract Society as one volume in their series of Christian Classics. He wrote in April two letters to the *Times*, which were published, calling attention to the teaching of that treatise on the nature of man and the purpose of the divine Incarnation, that purpose being to raise man out of the corruption caused by sin, which would otherwise end in non-existence for the sinner; in fact, the same teaching as that contained in his own book, *Life in Christ*. Referring to these letters in the *Times*, a writer in the *Nonconformist and Independent* said: "Mr. White, in calling attention in the *Times* to

the *Incarnation of the Word* by Athanasius, modestly ignores what theologians must regard as his own far more able treatise."

In returning from Bournemouth on April 15th, a halt was made at Winchester for a visit to the Hospital of the Holy Cross, a mile and a half away from the city, and to the Cathedral. At the latter they were conducted round it by the most educated verger they had ever met, who really explained the monuments. Mr. White calls the building "a dream of sublime beauty in stone," and meditating on the powerful influence exerted by such buildings he asks: "What chance against such force have the ignominious little chapels of dissent?" The answer to that question, as furnished by the questioner himself, is: None, except by the exertion of a superior force, and that of a spiritual character.

On May 4th he preached once more at Kensington, after seven months' absence, and had a pleasant meeting with many friends there; on the 18th and again on June 14th he was back in his old pulpit at Hawley Road Chapel, and many old friends were there to greet him. Indeed he now was able to undertake preaching engagements, and throughout this and the following year these were very numerous.

On July 31st he started for a short visit to Holland. Travelling *viâ* Harwich and Rotterdam, after a few hours only in the latter town he proceeded to the Hague, afterwards visiting Scheveningen, Leyden, and Amsterdam. During this visit he took some pains to discover in the Dutch picture galleries the pictorial records of the return of Charles II. to England in 1660. He forthwith communicated the results of his search to the public in a letter to the *Times*, giving also a description of another picture of the series existing in England as private property. This long letter, occupying nearly a column of the paper, was followed soon afterwards by a short one from the Director of the Communal Museum at the Hague, expressing regret

that the writer of the former letter had not visited that Museum, where he would have found another picture of the series. These facts may serve to indicate the interest felt by Mr. White in art as well as in theology, philanthropy, and politics.

One of the original helpers at Hawley Road, who had been a steady and efficient supporter in the most trying and difficult periods of that enterprise, and a faithful deacon during many years, Mr. John Carter, died on September 9th, and was buried at Abney Park on the 13th, Mr. White officiating. Mr. White also wrote a biographical memorial of his old friend, which appeared with a portrait in the *Congregational Magazine*, and ended with the following words : "In offering this brief memorial of my departed friend, I have but feebly expressed the debt of gratitude I owe to him for long years of courageous sympathy and aid. But I shall be only too thankful if hereafter my name shall be remembered by any in connection with any share in the modern testimony concerning Christ as the life of men, that hereby the name of this 'good soldier of Jesus Christ' shall be remembered, among those of others, along with it. He was a good deacon in the Church, but he was first of all a good man, a man of God, a good husband, father, brother, friend ; an industrious, straightforward man of business ; an honest politician ; and therefore a pillar of strength in the Church as a devout, steadfast, and consistent Christian. He rests in the peace of God, and will live for ever with the Lord whom he loved."

In September Mr. White spent two Sundays in Bristol, staying with his old friend Dr. Trestrail, and preaching at Tyndale Baptist Chapel for Dr. Glover, who at that time was absent visiting the missionaries in China. The week intervening between the Sundays was spent at his brother's house, Pixton Park, near Dulverton.

In the welfare of the Church at Hawley Road he continued to take a fatherly interest after his retirement, and

was always ready to lend his aid and counsel in time of need. On the question of an immediate successor his advice had been sought and given; it had also prevailed, Mr. Basil Martin having been chosen. After a time, however, Mr. Martin had decided to go to Oxford for a further period of study at Mansfield College. The next minister chosen was Mr. Spedding Hall, and Mr. White went to the meeting at his settlement on October 16, 1890, and took part in his Ordination the following January. On the first Sunday in November he gave the lecture to artizans on "Men's Wages, past, present, and future," wherein he showed how men live under a system of payment for work for both worlds, and explained the combination of salvation by grace, and reward for Christians according to work. In April 1891 he preached there a sermon having relation to the Census taken in that month, enforcing the certainty that each one must give account of himself to God.

In 1892, when the Church was again without a pastor, Mr. White occupied the pulpit for two months. He also attended a meeting of the trustees of the building, who met to consider a proposal which resulted in the settlement of the Rev. W. Herwood Allen as pastor. After that he several times preached on the Sunday School anniversary, and in 1896 attended the Church anniversary in March, when he spoke of the unwearying nature of true religion, those who have it being never weary of the truth believed, nor of the conflict for it, nor of the companions of their labours. He records the strong impression then received of the indestructible nature of the spiritual affections. "The loving recollection of our labours continuing as fresh as ever in the people so instructed and guided in past years, although so many of the old companion workers are departed. They have absorbed and lived upon the truths which they learnt at the hand of God, and find them still 'a light that shines upon the road that leads them to the Lamb.'"



Whenever he undertook a service for his old friends he could not easily be prevented from fulfilling it. This was so even to the last. Only a few years before his death he went up to London, to the wedding of the daughter of one of the old friends at Hawley Road. The day was notable on account of the floods of rain which deluged the streets. So great was the storm that one of the invited guests was unable to attend, and sent as his message to the bride and bridegroom, "Many waters cannot quench love." On some one remarking on the appropriateness of the quotation, Mr. White said: "I think I should have said, 'As in the days of Noah they were marrying and giving in marriage, when the flood came.'"

In the beginning of the year 1891 the first volume of Dr. Petavel's book, *The Problem of Immortality*, in French, was issued. Mr. White took particular interest in its publication, and he wrote a long article describing and recommending it, which was published in the *Christian World* of April 30th. The English translation did not appear until early the following year, when the second volume of the French work had appeared. Writing to Dr. Petavel a little later, and referring to this book, he said: "I think it is very generally felt that our movement has been a really conservative one amidst so much destructive work and amidst a scepticism more fundamental than any known within the last few centuries." After the publication of the English translation in 1892, he wrote to Dr. Petavel of the book: "The adversaries are fairly confounded by its elaborate learning and power, and temper unmatched for gentleness in the business of cutting down a big thorn bush and planting in its place the Tree of Life."

The principal events of interest in relation to Mr. White during that year were the following: In March the farewell meeting on retirement of Rev. J. C. Harrison from his long and fruitful pastorate at Park Chapel, Camden Town, at which Mr. White was present, Dr. Stoughton presiding.

On April 1st J. D. Morell, M.A., LL.D., one of his Glasgow fellow-students, died. In June he had a visit from Professor Cheyne, whom he introduced to the meeting of the Fraternal Society held at his own house at Highwood Hill. In July he wrote to Rev. W. D. McLaren thus: "I keep on slowly but steadily declining in energy and power. My memory is weaker than ever. Yet, thankful to say, I preached lately six Sundays running in large churches, probably in all to five or six thousand people, which was worth doing. I am to be a member of the Pan-Congregational Council, one of the English hundred." In the same month came the meetings of that International Congregational Council, in which he took part, and was pleased to make the acquaintance of a number of American and Colonial ministers. Dr. Dale was the chosen President, and he gave his address in that capacity on the 14th, but was too ill to do more. Mr. White had the opportunity in the afternoon of that day to speak as to the progress of opinion on Life eternal during the previous fifty years.

In August he had a letter in the *Christian World* on "Spirit Manifestations," wherein he states his personal knowledge of some of the famous practitioners of these "curious arts," as William and Mary Howitt, S. C. Hall, &c., and adds: "But I go much further than the Psychical Society, being fully persuaded that the results occurring are produced in many cases by the action of disembodied spirits, mostly human and non-Christian. . . . The reality of such experiences I hold it lawful for such competent inquirers to test by careful examination. But once determined to be real and spiritual, I hold just as firmly that further communication is unlawful, being forbidden by both the Jewish and Christian Revelations."

In October he went once more to Paris with his wife and two youngest daughters, this being his last visit to the Continent. There they remained a fortnight, so as to give

the young people a good idea of that great city. While they were there Mr. Byse, the translator of *Life in Christ* into French, spent a few days in Paris, and was much with them. He took them to an afternoon meeting of mothers, in connection with the McAll Mission. Mr. White told of the work of Mrs. Ranyard in London, Mr. Byse interpreting. At another meeting he met Mr. McAll, who reminded him that he had called upon him at Hereford when on his wedding trip. On the return journey they halted at Amiens to visit the Cathedral, which Mr. White calls "a vast Gothic mountain of stone, an elaborate monument of middle-age corruption of Christianity." In November he attended a meeting at Browning Hall, Walworth, that being the old chapel in York Street which he attended in his boyhood, and there he spoke of those old times as well as of times more recent. On Christmas Day he went to Upper Norwood, and there called upon a Mrs. Williams, who remembered him as a baby, although he was then seventy years of age; probably the only person then living who could so remember him.

Early in 1892 Mr. White was invited to speak at a meeting of Nonconformist Unionists to be held on March 30th. He accepted the invitation, and at Princes Hall on that date delivered a carefully prepared speech in justification of the Unionist attitude. Just at this time he was much gratified by receiving from Dr. Perowne, Bishop of Worcester, a letter in which, referring to Dr. Petavel's book, *The Problem of Immortality*, then lately published in English, he wrote: "You and he have done an unspeakable service to Christendom. Both works are admirable alike in learning, temper, and force of argument."

In April Mr. White went to Edinburgh and preached there on the 10th, meeting for the last time the Rev. David Russell, his old college friend, who died in the following month. In April also he was the Merchants' Lecturer, and the subject of his lectures was "The Higher Criti-

cism." These lectures attracted more attention than he had anticipated, and that over a wide area. They were promptly reprinted as a handy little book. Referring to this publication he wrote in the following January to Dr. Gloag: "It is very kind in a great critic like you to send me an encouraging word respecting my little book for the people on the 'Higher Criticism.' Indeed, I am thankful to say it is doing some good among our younger men, for they cannot pretend to say that I have lived on 'obscurantist principles,' so they are perhaps more willing to listen to me than to one purely orthodox all round."

At the end of June came the General Election under Lord Salisbury. Mr. White wrote a letter, which appeared in the *Times*, setting forth reasons why he considered that the return to power of Mr. Gladstone would be disastrous to the country. A leading article in the same issue referred to the letter, and quoted some of its points as highly important, not only to the Nonconformists but to the people generally. Notwithstanding these prognostications, Mr. Gladstone was returned to power, though he failed to carry his proposals for an Irish Parliament through the House of Lords.

From July 14th to August 10th Mr. White was away from home, with Mrs. White and two daughters, visiting first Edinburgh and Stirling, then Braco, as the guests of Mr. Samuel Smith, M.P., at his beautiful place, Orchill, where they stayed a fortnight; thence to Ambleside and Brathay Fell, where Dr. Andrews was their host for a week. In both these visits they enjoyed views of magnificent scenery, in spite of occasional rain. On the homeward way they went, *via* Birmingham, to Stratford-on-Avon to see the Shakespeare memorials, and then to Warwick and Oxford.

It was in this summer that the collapse of the "Liberator" group of societies became known. One result of this was to cause considerable pecuniary loss



to Mr. White, who was one among the large number of ministers interested, either as shareholders or depositors.

Failure of memory for facts in the immediate past was, thus far, the only serious indication of decaying mental power in Mr. White. He did not, however, cease to preach and lecture, both at Mill Hill and in other parts of the country, as he had invitations, until the beginning of June 1893, when he was again laid aside by illness, and had to forego preaching for nearly a year. The persistence of this illness led him, before the time came for his next turn as Merchants' Lecturer, to resign that office. The last series of his lectures, delivered in May, were on "Spiritism," a subject on which, as already stated, he held firm convictions, believing that, while there had been much trickery in connection with it, there was reality in some of the phenomena. But he was convinced that whatever reality there was in it, the practice is absolutely forbidden in the Scriptures. With respect to the quoted prohibition of necromancy in Deuteronomy xviii., the authenticity of which having been questioned on the ground that the Canaanites were never driven out of the land, that being held to prove that the threatening against them was not the Word of God, Mr. White asserted that the promise of the expulsion of the Canaanites was subject to conditions on the part of the Israelites which were not fulfilled by them. And he answered a further objection to the penalty of death for sin as being not in accordance with the character of God, by saying, among other things: "It is no doubt true that 'God is love.' But love is itself the fiercest and most formidable of forces against those who contest its rule. 'God is love' and 'Our God is a consuming fire' are, I take it, but opposite sides of the One everlasting Reality, as all Nature declares and all Revelation confirms."

On the question of authenticity one of his suggestions was: "It is worthy of inquiry whether this eighteenth

chapter of Deuteronomy can even be imagined to be part of a fabrication in the time of Josiah, or the product of the later ages of the Hebrew monarchy. Heathen spiritualism is set against Hebrew prophecy; both are acknowledged as real, but the latter alone as divine. And the much earlier banishment of witches by Saul looks as if this law against necromancy was much older than the age of Hilkiah."

In a letter addressed to Dr. Gloag in Scotland, and written at Dover, Mr. White says: "I quite agree with you in the suspicion that spiritualism and other signs indicate the closing days of the present dispensation. We must not allow the early or later millenarian follies to scare us away from that prominent revelation of the New Testament that the 'Mystery of Iniquity,' in the corruption and rejection of pure Christianity, is to have a supernatural crushing."

In February 1893 Mr. Gladstone had introduced his new Bill for creating an Irish legislature, the provisions of which Mr. White carefully studied, but without being convinced that they were practicable. In an interview with a representative of the *Pall Mall Gazette* in April, he described his objections to the scheme. Following closely the discussion in Parliament as it proceeded, he felt moved in July to protest, in a letter to the *Times*, against Tory insults to the Irish people. Later on he again wrote to the *Times* in order to appeal to his Nonconformist brethren to reconsider their position in view of recent utterances of some of the Irish leaders; and he urges them to speak out against the physical violence party, and to say definitely how far they are prepared to go in granting autonomy to Ireland. He was convinced that the Dissenters generally were following the lead of Mr. Gladstone more because they hoped that he would lead them to Disestablishment than because they really agreed with his Irish policy. For this opinion he must have had some

foundation in fact, but certainly it was unjust to the great body of those who supported that policy and were truly anxious to deal justly and generously with the Irish people and their sentiments.

In May 1893 he had another opportunity of seeing Queen Victoria in a position near enough to observe the expression of her face. It was at the opening of the Imperial Institute, and he thus wrote of it: "Well now I am seventy-four. On the day before yesterday I saw the Queen, who is the same age; she sat alone on the back seat of her carriage, with two daughters in front of her. As still as a stone sat she. I liked her large, round face; she looked *good*, not gay, but restful and intelligent, with a tinge of mystery over her countenance as if looking back on the wonderful past, and not forgetful of the future. What specially struck me was the dignity and repose, and the look as to something beyond. It made me cry a little (inside) to think of it all. And now, who goes first through the eternal gates, she or I? Both of us seventy-four."

After this came the illness which laid him aside from public work for so many months. He suffered much from rheumatism, for which massage was tried, but without much benefit. A visit to Dover was undertaken in October, and apparently did some good, and it enabled him to renew some old acquaintances. Through the winter he remained at home, doing little except reading and writing. But in December he was well enough to attend, as one of the stewards, at a public dinner to Mr. Albert Spicer on his return from a visit to the mission stations in India and Ceylon.

Of his life during this period of inactivity he gave the following playful account to one of his numerous correspondents in November: ". . . I have no news to tell, and am keeping pretty well. Though feeling very old, because it is so cold. Rheumatics make me shiver, and somewhat affect the liver. Our trees are nearly bare, stripped by the

wintry air. But one brave oak keeps green, from the study clearly seen. Whose boughs we sharply thinned, to let in sun and wind. Our flowers are nearly dead, save here and there a head of coloured blooms, which Edith and Irene cut to decorate our rooms. This is not exciting poetry, but it is of native growth, and reflects the mood of the hour—a stupid mood; but a certain fraction of most lives is spent in stupidity. . . . This morning I read to myself some of the Psalms. How wonderful they are! If you compare them with the poetry of Babylon, Assyria, Greece, and Rome, they seem to belong to another world, and so they do. They can be accounted for only by the truth of divine Revelation, and by them the saints of all ages are brought into conscious unity. All best hymns are but echoes of them. . . .”

In April 1894 he paid another visit of a fortnight to Dover, from which he gained considerable benefit. While there he wrote as follows in the letter to Dr. Gloag already quoted: “Your kind letter finds me at this seaside, after many months of weakness and of abstinence from all public work and nearly all writing. For the time, I seem now to be ‘on the mend’; but at seventy-five one cannot but know that the last days are at hand, and if the remaining years pass as quickly as the past few the final stage cannot seem to be very distant. And then comes the great solution of life’s mystery, and the rending of the veil which hangs before our eyes during our active days. I have read much on astronomy which would make me a sceptic were it not for the Gospel of John, which gives us a flight of golden steps up to those mysterious heights, and opens a way through the rent veil into the Holiest. Pray for me, both of you, that my faith may not fail when I must step out of the boat on to those deep waters, but may hear the Eternal Voice and feel the grasp of the Helping Hand!”

Early in 1894 occurred the death of Rev. S. Minton-



Senhouse, M.A., and in response to a request from the editor of the *Faith*, Mr. White wrote the following tribute of affectionate gratitude to his deceased friend :—

“Only those who have been life-long contemporaries with Mr. Minton, and enjoyed his intimacy, can quite fully and properly appreciate the nobleness of the man and the immense value of his life-labours. He and I were thrown much together as humble English proto-martyrs of the Truth in the earlier days of the modern controversy on *Life in Christ*; and therefore I am at least qualified to bear witness to the part which he took in this latest revival of the ancient testimony on Immortality.

“His earliest convictions on the subject were gained by reading, as he has often said, about the year 1850 (as he sat in St. James’s Park), a copy of the first very inadequate edition of *Life in Christ* (written in 1845, when I was still a young pastor at Hereford, fifty years ago); and from that time he never wavered for a moment in his strong adhesion to the ancient truth of *Life in Christ* only—the Life Immortal.

“Up till that date he had been regarded as one of the rising stars of the Church of England Evangelical firmament. But from that date he was called to endure the fate of a ‘heretic,’ and an ‘apostate from the truth,’ and was ‘cast out of the synagogue,’ losing all hope of further preferment.

“He had up till that time written only on prophetic subjects, and on the growing superstition of the Tractarian party in the Church of England. His tract on *The Romish Doctrine of Intention* was spoken of by G. Stanley Faber, D.D., Master of Sherburn, as ‘one of the most logically able productions he had ever met with’; and similar praise was awarded to it by Dean MacNeile. But after his conversion to Conditionalism, he wrote industriously and most successfully on this subject. His chief works were :—

"1. *The Glory of Christ* in the Creation and Reconciliation of all things, with special reference to the doctrine of Eternal Evil.

"2. *A New Bible* : or Scripture re-written, to prove the doctrines of Necessary Immortality and Eternal Evil.

"3. *The Eternity of Evil* ; which was sold by thousands.

"4. *Immortality* : an appeal to Evangelists.

"5. *The Way Everlasting*. A Review of the controversy.

"6. *The Harmony of Scripture* on Future Punishment ; or the Truths contained in the views of Origen and Augustine, reconciled in the earlier apostolic doctrine of a Conditional Immortality.

"All of these pieces had a wide circulation, and had much to do with the final wider diffusion of the Truths advocated.

"He is gone—but he has fallen asleep in sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection at the return of our Lord Jesus Christ to reign over the earth, at the end of 'the times of the Gentiles.'

"A nobler soul I have never known. He was one of the men with whom it will be delightful to spend the future Eternity—and he was also one of the men who helped others to believe in it—a man so self-forgetting, and so forward to acknowledge spiritual gifts of grace in others, that all who knew him could not but be drawn to magnify and admire the grace of God in him.

"I trust that every copy of the works whose titles I have mentioned will be treasured up as a memorial of this true witness of Jesus, who has left behind him a memory the dearest to those who best knew his tenderness, his integrity, his lofty aims, and his quiet courage ; for his whole life was a visible evidence of things unseen and eternal."

That the feeling expressed in the foregoing testimony was heartily reciprocated by Mr. Minton-Senhouse was shown by a memorandum in his own handwriting, found among his papers by his wife, after his death, and sent by

her to Mr. White. "I desire that my edition of *Owen's Works*, which was part of the present made to me on leaving Percy Chapel, should be given to my dear and honoured friend, the Rev. Edward White, as a small recognition of the debt of gratitude that I owe him for having been the means of opening my eyes to the full meaning of the record which God gave of His Son, that in Him we have eternal '*life*,' and not merely eternal happiness.

"The reward of his self-sacrificing efforts to rescue that great truth from the obscurity in which it had been buried for ages by an unscriptural theology, based on the heathen figment of man's natural immortality, will never be given him in this world, but will be an added glory to that incorruptible crown, that crown of life which he has so faithfully preached in words whose '*sound* has gone forth into all the world.'

" '*O sit anima mea cum tuâ*,' in that day !

("I wish the utmost possible publicity to be given to the above, as far as it can suitably.")

## CHAPTER XVIII

### LATEST ACTIVITIES

1894-1897; AGE 75-78

WHEN May arrived in 1894, Mr. White was able to resume active work, but his preaching was confined to places near his home. On the first day of the month he attended the Committee of the London Missionary Society; on the 8th the Congregational Union; on the 17th he was at an anniversary meeting at St. Albans; on the 20th he preached a Sunday School sermon at Hawley Road; and on the 22nd he spoke at a meeting of Conditionalists at the Memorial Hall. A sermon on "Christ in the Hospitals," preached on June 10th at East Finchley, was published in the *Christian World Pulpit*; as was also another, preached in the School Chapel at Mill Hill on July 8th, the subject of which was "The Existence of God."

The day following the preaching of that sermon he went on a visit to Bishop Perowne, at Hartlebury Castle. There he met and had a long talk with Professor A. H. Sayce, LL.D., on the value of that gentleman's work, and on his confirmation of the historical character of the biographies in the Pentateuch.

Leaving Hartlebury on the 12th, he went to Malvern for a few days, calling on some old friends there, and making a day trip to Hereford, where he met with some



persons who remembered his ministry in that city. Tewkesbury, Worcester, Reading, and Silchester also were visited on the return journey, and he reached home on the 20th. The characteristic letter from which the following extract is given was written to one of the Malvern friends, and it refers to this journey:—

“Thanks for your kind little note. But you shouldn’t abuse ‘Theology’ indiscriminately, any more than I should commend it. For I feel sure that any theology coming from the Author of Nature has at least *one* bright side, like Nature, even if, like Nature, it has one severe side for wicked people and law-breakers. It is too true that the characters of many professed Christians and the teaching of many of the ‘preachers’ becloud and darken the sky and afford us little help in thinking of God in a way which attracts us to Him. But there are quite enough really good and delightful Christians to help us to brighter views of their Master, like light which breaks through the clouds; and it is necessary for us to make the most of these mirrors of the Eternal Light. Nobody thinks of pitching into Nature because of her many cloudy and dark days, and all who love Nature and her brightness should set at defiance the corruptions of Christianity and stand for the glorious light it throws both on time and eternity. There’s a little sermon for you! my dear friend, from a convinced old heretic theologian. I’ve got your picture in my study, as a contribution to my theology! and a pleasant one . . . We all came back much refreshed by our outing; Hartlebury, Malvern, and Silchester made a most amusing trio of places to us. When you come to town you must come and see us. I will show you whole rows of blessed books on a ‘theology’ which shines in the very colours of Nature itself. I know you will forgive this outbreak of theology from your old friend who has found rest in a way of thinking which unites most wonderfully earth and sky; yes, ‘the blue ethereal sky.’”

Two days after his return from this trip, Mr. White attended the funeral service of his old and valued friend, the Rev. J. C. Harrison. The crowd that filled Park Chapel in the middle of the day testified to the value of that faithful minister's life and labours.

In the August issue of the *Nineteenth Century*, an article by Mr. Gladstone appeared, in which he pleaded for the recognition of Nonconformists as Christians by members of the Established Church, on the ground that the laws against heresy and schism bear some analogy to those of the Mosaic law against taking usury and making graven images. To this Mr. White replied in a long letter dated August 5th, which appeared in the *Times*. He pointed out that the Mosaic law did not forbid taking usury or interest from strangers, but only from brother Israelites, and that the prohibition against graven images was only when they were for the purpose of worship. Accordingly he proceeds: "Instead therefore of accepting Mr. Gladstone's benevolent plea for the recognition of Nonconformists as Christians by the members of the Established Church, notwithstanding his apparent admission of the exclusive validity of the Churchmanship of these last, I am afraid that we must, if we accept correct principles of Old Testament exegesis, submit to acknowledge that the argument of our most honoured and distinguished advocate is unsound; and that if no more solid basis can be found for our social enfranchisement, we must continue under the ban of historical Christianity and High Church tradition.

"But I will venture to add that the Nonconformity to which many of us have adhered for a life-time has been founded on the persuasion that the leading principle of Mr. Gladstone's article is a mistake; and that no system of Churchmanship was set up by the apostles of Christ, except that of city churches, locally independent, and not united by any organized and centralized system of earthly government into one world-wide empire by an organized

army of 'priests,' but were bound together only by the One indwelling Spirit, and governed only by that written apostolic law of love which is supposed still to animate all sincere Christians.

"The upshot of my argument, therefore, is, that those Churches which are separate from the State control, or locally independent of widely organized governments, do not derive any valid support from Mr. Gladstone's argument on the modification of Mosaic laws on usury or image-making, but rest on the more solid basis of conformity to apostolic example."

Mr. White was one of a number of retired London ministers who were invited to spend the evening of October 16th at the Memorial Hall; and there he narrated briefly the main facts in his own ministerial career, from Cardiff by way of Hereford to Kentish Town and Kensington.

Although not now undertaking preaching engagements at a distance, he appeared several times on anniversary occasions at Hawley Road, where it was always easy for him to speak; and he preached at Mill Hill several remarkable sermons which were printed in the *Christian World Pulpit*. Thus on November 11, 1894, he preached at the School Chapel on "Valour in Common Life," taking as a text 2 Peter i. 5: "Add to your faith virtue," showing at the beginning the etymological meaning of "virtue" to be "manliness." He went on to speak of the influence of school life in development of character, and of the importance of each individual character as having a share in the formation of others, and therefore the great need for decision of character in the right direction in early life.

Another sermon to the boys, on March 10, 1895, was an invitation to them to come to the Communion. He took for his text the words: "Do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke xxii. 19). Referring to the case of Dr. Arnold at Rugby, who, by the way in which he spoke in his sermons

about the ordinance, induced a large number of the lads in the school there, even the young ones, to take a decided stand, and acknowledge themselves soldiers of Christ, by joining in the Communion, he went on to give an explanation of the meaning of the two simple ordinances of Christianity, baptism and the Lord's Supper, and to show the joyful character of true Christianity. His hope for the boys he thus expressed: "In the strong and bright and gay time of your merry early life you will courageously embrace and hold fast this blessed hope of everlasting life beyond, and you elder young men will lend, I trust, the immense force of your sympathy, your example, your courage, your energy, your intelligence, to aid the younger and the weaker to choose and maintain the better part which 'shall not,' says Jesus Christ, 'be taken away' from either of you."

At the Methodist Church, Mill Hill, he preached on June 2, 1895, on "The Connection between the Transfiguration and the Ascension of Christ," and that sermon seems to have been the last published in the *Christian World Pulpit*. In it he drew a graphic picture of the company assembled at the Ascension, to whom the "two men" in bright raiment appeared, and gave the promise that this same Jesus should so come again. These men he thinks must have been the same two who were with the Lord at the Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah, not angels, since when angels are mentioned in the New Testament they are so called, and are not called "men."

Mr. White felt very deeply the death of Dr. R. W. Dale, which occurred in March 1895, his deceased friend having been a strong and steady support to him in his long struggle against theological and ecclesiastical prejudice and ostracism.

Mr. White was accustomed to say that he thought he was the only man in the village of Mill Hill who was, more or less closely, in touch with all the four religious



communities existing there. In the chapel connected with the Mill Hill School, and the Methodist place of worship, he often preached; he maintained friendly relations with the vicar, and sometimes worshipped in the Anglican Church; but he also occasionally attended some public function at the Roman Catholic College, where young men are trained for mission work. On May 6th in this year he was present at a valedictory service on the departure of five young priests for Africa. Some extracts may be given here from his description of the ceremonial, as it illustrates the writer's catholic sympathies. Cardinal Vaughan was the presiding dignitary who gave the "charge" to the departing missionaries. He "was dressed in splendid jewelled robes of scarlet and gold . . . and wore a tall white mitre, richly gilt, which was a pasteboard imitation of those 'cloven tongues' of fire which sat on the heads of the apostles. But his dress was forgotten in the aspect of his countenance, which was that of an able and earnest ruler of the Church. It is thirty years or more since we served together on the London Committee for Temperance Legislation, when I little thought the London priest would become a splendid Cardinal, and perhaps ascend the papal throne.

"To-day I must do him the justice to say that no one could have delivered a more sympathetic, inspiring, and affecting address, an evangelical address. . . . It thrilled through every heart. . . . Then came, *more Romano*, a procession, with chants and prayers, through the beautiful grounds of the College . . . to the sacred spot where one of their own dead missionaries reposes, and on their return to the church came the final farewells between the living.

"In the ordination of missionary priests there is sometimes a ceremony of almost overpowering impression, and so it was to-day. The five young priests were brought to the lowest step of the altar, and stood facing the congregation, and then the students of the college in a crowd,

the tutors, and the priests of the diocese formed a circulating procession to the altar, and in turn embraced the departing young men, kissed them with warm affection on both cheeks, and stooping down kissed their feet, after which the choir and organ raised the chant, 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that bring the glad tidings and publish the peace!'

"The tide of visible emotion raised in the congregation by this parting expression of brotherhood and affection was such, I must admit, as is seldom seen in a Protestant farewell. And surely it must remain as a stimulating memory in the hearts of the young men, reminding them in the African wilderness of the object of their mission and of the well-spring of the hearty love borne to them in their home. . . .

"I think I came away from this affecting service with no diminution of Protestant principle, but with perhaps a keener sympathy with my dear young neighbours in this village, who from time to time are leaving England for a battle with the powers of darkness in Central Africa and in the great burning islands of the Equatorial archipelago. I am sure it is well to remember John Knox and Oliver Cromwell, but we must not wholly banish from our sympathies the fellow-believers of Fénelon, Pascal, and Frederic Ozanam."

At Hackney College meeting in June, Mr. Nunn gave the address, while Mr. White presided. He records that he "talked with a number of anonymous ghosts, whose faces," says he, "I knew and who knew me, but whose connections I had wholly forgotten; yet they were ghosts with kindly feelings towards me. A long life gathers an immense crowd of facial acquaintances, but few life-long intimacies." This is a pathetic note of the failure of his memory.

In the following month, July 23rd, he went to the consecration of All Saints' Church at Swanscombe, where

there was a great gathering in the garden of the house in which his father had lived for many years, and where in 1842 he had met the lady who became his first wife. This visit to the spot formerly so well known, naturally revived the impressions of many events of his early life, which he records in his note-book.

Always anxious to enlarge his stock of knowledge and experience, he was willing to do some things and to go to some places from which many a younger person would shrink. Thus in August of this year, being seventy-six years of age, to the surprise of some of his friends he went the round of the Great Wheel at Earl's Court, and when at the top enjoyed, in fairly clear air, a wide view over West and North London, as far as Harrow and all the northern heights.

In the following month he went, with his wife and daughter, to Cromer for a fortnight. They were at first disappointed with the place, but gradually found it more interesting. While there, however, Mr. White was laid up for three days, which was a diminution of the enjoyment. He was interested in studying the effect of the sea in washing away and covering large portions of the cliffs; and the curious structure of the church, built so largely of flints, and also its history. On the return journey they halted successively at Norwich, Bury St. Edmunds, Ely, and Cambridge, visiting the cathedrals at Norwich and Ely and some of the colleges and the Backs at Cambridge.

The autumnal meetings of the Congregational Union were held this year at Brighton. Mr. White went, and attended some of them in the famous Dome. He enjoyed the few days at the seaside in bright, clear weather, meeting with many old friends, and making some new acquaintances, among whom were the three Bechuana chiefs, Khama, Sebele, and Bathoen, with whom he was pleased to shake hands.

At the Hawley Road Anniversary on October 7th he

spoke of the chief discouragement in Christian work, in the feeling of individual impotence for converting others, while opposed by the whole force of an apostate world, united in the firm resolution to hold fast deceit. And the remedy: the assured help of Omnipotence; the very same power that moves the globe and all the orbs of heaven; the power which dwelt in Christ and the apostles; the power of God unto salvation. All work is for individual salvation. No one can deny that it is possible to do something for the salvation of one person. A spoken word is better than a printed tract, specially when it is a word which comes from a person whose life is a visible result of union with the spiritual world, and whose character renders attractive the invitation to repentance and faith. A soul that lives in God has a voice in unison with the angelic companies, and these are souls working together for God, whose words are akin in tone and attraction to the angelic songs. We must not be too much discouraged from endeavours to persuade others to repentance, by the consciousness of our own faults. It is in the character of sinful men, not of perfect saints, that we speak to others.

"Standing here," said he, "after forty-three years from the beginning of this Church's work, the eye rests on no spot throughout its area where does not arise before the mind the figure of some noble and beloved worker now departed, workers and worshippers whose memory is dear to all their survivors, faithful deacons, faithful Sunday-school teachers, faithful district visitors, who can never be forgotten, who lived the life which makes it easy to believe in the immortal life beyond. Through their fidelity, modesty, and good fellowship there sprang up a power which extended itself in some degree over England and America and the British Colonies, and gave wings to the Word of Life spoken, which bore it through English Christendom."



On one of the early days of March 1896 along with several other friends, Mr. White took afternoon tea at the house of Mrs. Charles, author of *Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family*, the book by which she is best known, although she wrote a large number of others. Two hours of interesting conversation were enjoyed, and in a letter to a friend Mr. White wrote: "When we saw her then there were no signs of decay or drooping spirits." Yet on the 28th of the same month she died, and at her funeral at Hampstead on April 1st "a great company, in the church and at the grave came to pay their last tribute of respect."

In the same month he wrote to Dr. Gloag, of Edinburgh: "I have done nothing of late in the Immortality discussion. I think the central idea of my life-work—the close connection between the Incarnation and man's hope of immortality—has made way widely among the Churches, both at home and abroad. . . . I never think of this discussion as dealing necessarily or chiefly with the destiny of the *lost*, but with that of the *saved*. I cannot but think that if so astounding an idea as that every man is a natural co-eval of the Eternal had lain at the basis of revelation, it would have found clear and frequent expression in Scripture. Whereas the ordinary language of both Testaments naturally lends itself to the idea that the Fall involved man in total mortality, and that it is redemption that brings to light 'Life and Immortality' for the regenerate part of mankind alone, here or hereafter. This idea is now widely diffused over the English-speaking world, but less in Scotland than elsewhere. Once put it into men's heads, and it seems to agree naturally with the ordinary language of both Testaments. Sir G. G. Stokes, of Cambridge, with whom I have corresponded for many years, has done a great deal to place it before scientific unbelievers, with marked success in quashing their principal objections to popular Christianity

Professor Adams, of Cambridge, the astronomer, was of the same way of thinking."

During the year 1896 he often found himself weak and ailing; but he still preached occasionally and attended various public functions. For instance, on February 11th he was at the opening of the Church House at Westminster, with the building of which his nephew, Mr. F. A. White, had much to do. On April 28th he was at a breakfast-meeting held in honour of Dr. Alexander Maclaren at the Holborn Restaurant. He was at Dr. Newman Hall's celebration at the Memorial Hall on May 22nd; and at the laying of the foundation stone of the new School Chapel at Mill Hill on October 31st, when he spoke of such buildings being visible monuments of an unseen and eternal world. At the old School Chapel his last sermon, the only one in 1897, was preached on May 23rd. It had reference to the long and beneficent reign of Queen Victoria, the text chosen being Isaiah xlix. 23: "Queens thy nursing mothers."

Meanwhile he had spent nearly three weeks, in August and September 1896, at Colwyn Bay, taking drives into the region around. He also paid a visit to the Congo Institute, where natives of that region of Africa are educated and prepared for the work of teaching Christianity to their fellow-Africans in their own land. Mr. White notes this as being the chief distinction of Colwyn Bay.

In April 1897 he spent a week at Dover, and was there again for some days in October. He much enjoyed sitting on the pier there and watching the activity on both land and sea. In August he paid a short visit to Yorkshire, whither his eldest daughter had gone to reside.

Although preaching opportunities during these years were so limited, his pen was not idle. Besides sermons that were written out in full for the Press, he worked for some time upon a biography of his sister, Mrs. Ranyard.

This, however, like a former essay in 1879, was never completed, for reasons which were extraneous to himself. He also wrote numerous letters, for, as he at this time remarked, writing letters to friends with whom one has formerly been intimate, letters likely to be preserved, may be a means of usefulness when local action is difficult. Many of his letters were thus private ; but many also were published in different papers. Some of these published letters deserve a more permanent publicity, and this may be gained by their incorporation in this memoir.

In the *British Weekly* a letter of his, dated October 26, 1895, on "Accumulation of Wealth," gave rise to an epistolary discussion on the subject in that paper, which continued until December, when Mr. White summed it up in another shorter letter. His two letters were as follow :—

I.

"SIR,—In the condensed account of Pastor Naumann's 'Social Letters to Rich People,' in last week's issue, there is one comforting element in the case of the rich as against the poor, which seems to be somewhat lost sight of in these 'Letters,' or at least in the abstract of their contents. I refer to the self-acting machinery of civilized society by which capital is compelled to minister largely to the necessities of labour and poverty, irrespective of goodwill.

"Any person, indeed, who possesses money and sits upon it, without attending to the needs of other persons, comes as near as possible to starving himself and every one else who might be benefitted by his expenditure. But the moment he begins to spend or invest, is it not true that he benefits his tradesmen and those poorer persons who earn a living in their service? And that which is true of small property-owners is equally true of rich capitalists. It is but a small part of their property which they can personally enjoy. The remainder is invested in various

undertakings, every one of which represents the payment of wage-earners. If a rich man invested his wealth in a heap of gold, of diamonds, or bank-notes, and sat upon it, the poor would gain little or nothing from their rich neighbour. But when he invests it in the enterprises of modern society, the bulk of his wealth passes immediately into the hands of skilled and unskilled labourers, who in return for this benefit furnish him with 'interest' or an 'income' which is again spent upon wage-earners. Thus 'the rich and the poor meet together, and the Lord is the Maker of them all.'

"It appears to me that not a little of the blame popularly attaching to 'capitalists' is mistaken in its application. . . . When they invest their wealth in land which must be cultivated by labour, or in public enterprises, and even luxuries which must be paid for in solid coin, they are performing a large part in the scheme of social unity, as truly as the labourer or skilled artificer who receives half a crown or half a guinea a day for his pains. The rich man's duty to the afflicted poor comes under a distinct category.

"If the rich man spends his income not in rewarding the work of skilled and unskilled labour, but in games of chance, wasteful and demoralizing, or in an excess of domestic luxury which ruins morally all who share in it, then he comes under the curse of St. James, the Lord's brother, and 'heaps up to himself treasures of wrath against the last day.' But there is nothing wicked in being rich, so long as the wealth is honestly come by and religiously invested and spent as in the sight of the Great Judge.

"The destruction of capital would be the ruin of the working classes; indeed it would soon nearly wipe many of them off the face of the earth. Let the working man and the capitalist be taught that they are 'members one of another,' and let the relation between them be based on brotherly consideration of the common needs of life, and



there will then be no cause to invite the rich man to 'howl,' or the poor man to conspire and confiscate under pretence of 'social equality.'

"The main idea, however, which I had in sending you these few lines was to vindicate the 'divine right' of the capitalist as well as of the labourer, and to maintain that Socialism, even if it could start under equality, would soon pass into a complex system of capital and labour; so that the remedy for existing evils is not to be found in an equalization of conditions, but in trades-unions, in Christ's law of brotherly sympathy between the rich and the poor, and sometimes in a conscientious choice of investments, whereby the labourers may be most largely benefitted by the capitalist. I shall be glad to learn if I am wrong in these positions."

## II.

"SIR,—I have no reason to be dissatisfied with the correspondence which has followed my first letter upon this subject—a letter designed to console the people who are waiting for the confiscation of the landed property of the country and for the 'distribution of capital,' by the consideration that meanwhile they are reaping, in the reception of wages for labour, the benefits of that 'fixed capital' in a modified form. This, I think, has been proved over and over again by several of your ablest correspondents.

"And I think it has been conclusively shown that the notion of confiscating the landed property of this small country, and cutting it up into a vast chess-board of small holdings, on which the game of the people might be played as against the present 'nobility and gentry,' would end in an awful 'checkmate' to the industry of the nation. The history of landowning everywhere is the history of its people, as dependent on its physical as well as moral conditions; and I think it has been proved that if you could

by any revolution dispossess the present landowners and place upon the territory a numberless throng of petty proprietors, before fifty years were over the land would fall again into the hands of great and worse capitalists, and the work of dispossession would have to be done all over anew. Nothing but a jubilee law resembling that of the Jews could obviate this result, and such a law could become operative only under the direct government of Omnipotence. Under these circumstances I continue to feel grateful to Heaven for gradually raising up in England a system of landowning which, in several forms, satisfies the needs and the ambitions of various classes, not excepting those of industrious trading and working men, and which offers the best security against sudden revolutions and foreign schemes for introducing the despotisms of ignorance and mediocrity. There is no greater political miracle on earth than the raising up of the British nation on so small a territorial area; and one chief cause of its power has surely been the limitation of the order of landed proprietors. It is this which has forced the majority to a life of educated enterprise by land and sea, and placed the decisive influence in legislation largely in the hands of men trained to consider the permanent interests of the people. The poverty of the destitute classes among us is not caused by the fact that they are not landed proprietors, but chiefly by their refusal to learn in youth, and by their drunkenness afterwards. These at least are the conclusions which I have come to as the result of fifty years' pastoral labour among the working classes both in town and country."

To the last day of his life Mr. White continued his study of the Scriptures, and was ever ready to give to others the benefit of his study. Thus in 1895 a very interesting communication from him respecting "The Locality of the Pentecostal Outpouring of the Spirit" was printed in the *Christian*. In it he said :—

"I wonder what reply the majority of your readers would give to the question—'In what locality in Jerusalem occurred the wonderful scene of the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the sudden conversion of "about three thousand souls"?' If they have rested in domestic traditions similar to those in which most of us were brought up, they would at once reply, 'In some large house in Jerusalem, and probably in the "large upper room," where our Lord and His disciples "ate the Passover"' (Luke xxii. 12). But a closer attention to the details of the Gospel history, and to all the circumstances of the time, will, I think, clearly result in the conclusion that this wonderful scene occurred in the *Temple*'; and the reasons for this belief are then stated. He continues:—

"I conclude, therefore, that the scene of the great decisive miracle of the Christian religion, next to the Resurrection of Christ, was the area of the Temple, where, a thousand years before, the cloud of the Excellent Glory filled the House of the Lord, and consecrated it as 'House of Prayer for all nations.' The central publicity of the place, and the vision of the tongues of fire, as well as the thundering sound of the 'mighty rushing wind,' would ensure the immediate publication of the marvel throughout Jerusalem, and surround the persons of the apostles with a supernatural authority before which Pharisaic authority would be impotent. . . ."

To a private correspondent who had raised some objections to these views and arguments, he wrote:—

"As to 'one place,' I suppose you think that it is a literal translation of the Greek words, implying some other place than the Temple. But the words in the Greek are ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό, and the words refer to the unanimity with which they met together. The *place* was Solomon's Portico, as we elsewhere are distinctly told, on the south of the Temple square. Christianity did not begin in a garret, it was proclaimed to the crowds of Jews and

Gentile proselytes who were numerous there, swarming round this most public pulpit that Omniscience could devise, and that was the Temple where Christ Himself taught daily; in that same Solomon's Portico, of course, *not* in the central Temple area where the altar stood. That South Solomon's Portico was their Exeter Hall, with three sides open to the public, where every Jew had a right to go and walk and sit in the shade, and talk and teach and learn. And it was at least three or four times the length of Exeter Hall and twice the breadth, with the north shady side open to the Temple. It became the great material provision for opening the Gospel Truth to the people of Jerusalem, where nearly all 'rooms' were poky little places, holding about ten Jews closely packed. No Albert Hall available. Christendom ought to feel much obliged to me for again reviving this ancient piece of knowledge in this generation, which brings out so vividly the story of the early Gospel and makes a wonderful picture illustration for the story of Luke.

"I see you dwell on the word 'house' where they were sitting. This was the regular name given to the Temple, and Josephus generally calls it 'The House,' 'The House of the Lord,' or 'The Holy House.' At nine o'clock the proper place of devout Jews was in the Temple on the day of Pentecost, and Solomon's Portico was the most crowded part of the great assembly."<sup>1</sup>

In another letter to the same correspondent Mr. White says: "If the followers of Christ were *not* in the Temple on Pentecost morning, they were the only pious Jews who were not there."

Continuing to study the questions thus raised, he after-

<sup>1</sup> In a recently published book on *The Credibility of the Acts of the Apostles*, by Professor Chase, President of Queen's College, Cambridge, a similar view is advocated. Several of the editorial notes on first page of the *Expository Times* for July 1902 relate to that book, and they read like an echo of Mr. White's letter.



wards sent to the *Christian* a further communication relating to Solomon's Porch, which was published on the last day of 1896, and contained the following paragraphs:—

“The term ‘porch’ is now never used in English except to designate some more or less stately entrance to a public or notable building. The Greek word *stoa*, of which in the text of the old and new English versions of the New Testament the translation is uniformly *porch*, does not stand for a gateway at all, but for a roofed colonnade, pavilion, or cloister—a long pillared portico, open on one side to the view, and shading pedestrians from the sun on the southern side. Such was the shady *stoa* in Athens, where Zeno taught, whose disciples were thence called Stoics. This, too, is the proper signification of the word in the New Testament, as is hinted in the margin of the Revision by the substituted reading of *portico* in one of the places in the Acts where it occurs.

“This vast and lofty colonnade seems to have been plentifully furnished with seats—sometimes occupied by doctors of the law, as when in His childhood Jesus was found by His parents sitting there in the Temple—His ‘Father’s House’—‘both listening to them and asking them questions.’ In after years it was beneath the same long, shady promenade that Jesus so often walked and disputed with the scribes, and where once He had overturned the tables of the money-changers, who had converted the sacred site into a ‘den of thieves’ by their petty robberies in exchange.

“All devout Jews would at the third hour of the day of Pentecost be present to assist at the great morning sacrifice and to commemorate the giving of the law at Mount Sinai.

“In Solomon’s Portico, therefore, we may conclude, I think, with confidence, that the marvellous event occurred of the descent of the Holy Spirit in tongues of flame, and of the consequent outburst of joyful voices, in all the chief

languages of mankind, proclaiming pardon and eternal life to men through the death and resurrection of the ascended Messiah. As for the popular notion that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit occurred in the '*large upper room*' which had been hired by the apostles as the last place of meeting with their Lord, it seems to deserve no serious consideration. How could crowds of wondering worshippers have reached that small and temporary resting-place, or have found space to behold the miracle?

"This interpretation confirms the persuasion that that sacred site, so long 'trodden under foot by the Gentiles,' will again in the latter days become, in some higher form, the spiritual centre of the world, which, after ages of resistance and incredulity, will accept the Christian message which enables Jew and Gentile together to worship the Father in spirit and in truth."

To the Rev. Dr. Mackennal, who was his successor in the chair of the Congregational Union, he wrote in the middle of 1896 two letters, from which the following extracts are taken. After asking for news of Dr. Mackennal's family, he writes: "I suppose I am considerably older than you. Seventy-seven is an awfully long spell to account for. But I am now past doing either much good or harm of an active sort. If the antediluvians really lived for centuries, no wonder they fell to knocking one another on the head at the end of the time, from sheer impatience at each other's deafness and stupidity. As for me, I wish to kill no one—much the other way. But one longs to see some of the associates of a more active time. Do you ever come to London? If you do, take compassion on me. I built a house here fifteen years ago, with a view over twenty miles round, until the trees grew up and shut it out. But even now we see Harrow, and sometimes the Surrey hills, we being 450 feet above the Thames.

"My children are all married and settled, except two dear daughters, still with us, but just now absent on a lark

at Paris. I read a little, write nothing, and see few men who are moving the world. My burial service was performed when I retired from Camden Town to this place. Most of my time is spent in reading of past worlds, of whose inhabitants I hope to make acquaintance some day. Such interesting people must be somewhere, each one carrying evidently an unfinished story, and many of them a story whose beginning deserved to be continued in other worlds. I look up at the heavens, and into the world of the Bible, with greater interest than ever, with more interest than I could have believed possible forty years ago, and with almost no criticism. You may say: 'What a change!' But it is a state to which all are advancing. Now be charitable, and on four pages of note-paper give me some account of yourselves."

This epistle did not remain long without an answer from his friend, to which he thus responded: "I am very glad to have elicited from your photographic pen a lively picture of your 'state,' as St. Paul would say. My humble attempt, preceding it, seems to have succeeded at least in depicting an equally faithful representation of my own mental, or rather lunatic, condition as to detailed memory,<sup>1</sup> a disorder which causes me much difficulty in sceptical moments as to the possibility of remembering things for ever and ever, as we usually expect that good men will do who 'go to heaven.' But perhaps there will not be so much need for memory when the most delightful objects and occasions of thought will be ever present. Whether the unmingled joys of which we hear on Sundays will be as delightful as the present pleasures, 'touched with pain,' remains to be seen. . . . But perhaps the perpetual perfection of memory will be alleviated by intervals of oblivion, like the black lines in the spectrum. . . ."

Having been invited to attend the Hawley Road social

<sup>1</sup> The letter had been wrongly addressed, to Leicester instead of Bowden.

gathering in the autumn of 1896, Mr. White wrote to Mr. Russel Elliot, the secretary, a lively letter, in which he said: "Thanks to you and all Hawley Road friends for invitation for October 19th. An Exhibition of Fossils is a suitable part of any museum, and I shall be delighted to act that part on the 19th, if the weather allows me to keep a solid form. But if the damp breaks me up, why it will be no good sending up dust or fragments."

Invited again for the March anniversary in 1897, he struck a different note, saying: "As the years roll on, our own wheels drag somewhat more heavily, and we think twice before making a journey to London. There are reasons why we must decline your kind invitation for this year's anniversary at Hawley Road, though I shall be with you in spirit."

Another letter, embodying views long held and often expressed, may be quoted here. It was dated May 1, 1897, and addressed to the *Christian World*, on "Reading the Scripture Lessons," thus: "SIR,—In the prefatory address to the 'Dearly-beloved brethren' with which divine service commences in the Church of England it is said that we assemble and meet together for four purposes:—

"1. 'To render thanks for the great benefits which we have received' at the hands of God;

"2. 'To set forth His most worthy praise';

"3. 'To hear His most holy Word'; and

"4. 'To ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul.'

"It is on the third of these objects of assembly, that of 'hearing God's holy Word,' that I venture to offer a few observations.

"It may go without argument that the primary reference in this third clause: 'To hear His most holy Word' (printed with a capital W in the Prayer Book), is to the Scripture lessons, and not primarily to the sermon, which



may or may not deserve so honorific a title. And it is on the reading of the lessons in Nonconformist congregations that I am venturing to offer a few observations.

“General criticisms of an unfavourable character fail of their object through their generality and frequent exaggerations, and no one knows the habits of a sufficient number of readers in the churches to allow of any indiscriminate indictment. I shall, therefore, restrict myself to the statement that there are not a few congregations where the reading of holy Scripture, as an element in the public service of God, appears to many of us to be performed too often with less regard to distinctness, instruction, and impression than is desirable.

“One of the most wonderful qualities of the historians, psalmists, prophets, and apostles of this ancient Bible is that it is possible and delightful to read, for years together, so large a portion of them to public congregations, not only without shocking either the conscience or the taste of the modern world, but with a certainty of winning an admiring consent, when the reader does justice to his theme by the simplicity, distinctness, sympathy, and seriousness of his utterance, and by so much self-oblivion as will leave room for the impression that he is desirous of giving voice to those prophets and apostles of God, or to the sayings of the ‘Word made flesh,’ rather than to exhibit his own ability as a reader. The tone is the principal thing which any man gives us in daily life, and it is the tone which principally characterizes the speech, the reading, the holy song in the service of the sanctuary. This right tone can, however, be learned only by a kind of secondary inspiration from God Himself.

“It is this wonderful Jewish Bible alone which can be publicly read for centuries together in the civilized world. No other selection from ancient or modern literature could endure such a trial.

“But a mere elocutionist, however brilliant his voice or

genius, can never adequately read the holy Scriptures in public. A soul in hearty sympathy with Christ is ever a more effective reader than a mere trained rhetorician. But such a sensitive soul who is also trained as a reader, will surpass even the most eloquent occupant of the reading-desk who cannot conceal his art, or forget himself, who is devoid of both pathos and reverence, and who perhaps openly shows that he does not even care to assume them.

"I cannot resist the temptation (if you are good enough to print this letter) of setting forth further a favourite heresy of mine, that Nonconformity greatly suffers from the lack of a lectionary for the public and private reading of the holy Scriptures. If so considerable a revolution should ever occur in our Churches as a willingness to accept such an admirable aid to the public and private reading of the Bible, my vote would be given at once for the adoption of the Revised Version, and as nearly as possible that of the last lectionary of the Church of England. The fact that on Sundays all the Protestants of England were reading the holy Scriptures from the same translation and by the aid of the same lectionary would awaken a lively sense of that underlying Protestant unity which embraces the overwhelming majority of the English religious people."

An editorial note in the same issue of the paper thus begins its comment on this letter: "The letter from Rev. Edward White, on the subject of reading the Scripture lessons in public worship, which we publish to-day, will be read with interest, not only for the evidence it gives of the unfailing mental vigour of its veteran writer, but also from the intrinsic importance of the subject. Our own impression is that the standard of public reading in Nonconformist congregations has of late been distinctly raised, though, as our correspondent suggests, it still leaves abundant room for improvement."

The Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria could not fail to appeal very powerfully to the imagination and sympathy of one so nearly of the same age as Her Majesty. Mr. White was unable to take so active a part in its celebration as he had done in the rejoicings at the Jubilee ten years previously. A few days, however, before the historic day in June, he went into the city to see the elaborate preparations for it. On the day itself some members of his family went to London and saw the royal procession. He contented himself with witnessing some of the local rejoicings at Mill Hill ; and in the evening, from the top of the house, he had a view of a dozen bonfires kindled in honour of the occasion.



## CHAPTER XIX

### THE CLOSING SCENE

1898 ; AGE 78-79

INDICATIONS of Mr. White's failing memory for recent facts and events had been frequent for several years. They became more marked towards the end of 1897, and his physical strength diminished. At the end of October, however, he had been able to take the leading part in the funeral service of his old and faithful friend, Dr. Stoughton, at Kensington Chapel, six other ministers following with addresses. Within seven years, more than a score of his intimate friends and relations had been removed by death, and Dr. Stoughton was the last of these whom he followed to the grave. The tragic death of Mrs. Dale, the widow of his attached friend Dr. Dale, a few months previously, had painfully affected him. He had been accustomed during many years to read a good deal in bed, and it was through a similar habit that Mrs. Dale lost her life, the bed-curtains having caught fire from the candle. Mr. White's comment on reading the sad story was: "Providence never takes the place in human life, or supplies the lack, of common sense. If people leave naked candles burning by bed-curtains, no angel is sent to remove them lest the curtains catch fire. If Providence undertook to supply the lack of sense, attention, and conscience in all free agents, the sense of responsibility would be every-



where destroyed, and the order of things completely overthrown so far as free agency was concerned. The object of Providence is to bring home to every free agent his own power and responsibility for results, the endless chain of evil consequences from one wicked and rebellious act or word. God will not permit free agents to pretend to be machines, driven by fate."

During the early months of 1898 his health failed. January was a nearly blank month to him. At the beginning of the new year he wrote: "The year opens in my study with a tolerably complete set of books for informing one of the chief things it is desirable to know in this world, but with a greatly diminished power of reading them, and thereby refreshing and extending one's knowledge of those subjects. It is but a few things which are now of importance to a rational reader: the history of divine revelation and the meaning of the sacred Scriptures, as opening a telescopic vision of an eternal world beyond."

On January 27th he notes that he had "not written for three weeks, much of the time rather poorly, some of it spent in bed." After that, during February, his reading, meditation, and writing were chiefly on the Bible. On the 12th of that month he addressed a letter to the *Christian*, which was published in the issue of March 10th, and may be given here as indicating his unshaken confidence, not only in the Book itself, but also in the canon of interpretation which he had adopted at the beginning of his career, and according to which he had consistently studied and taught. The letter is headed:—

"‘IT MEANS WHAT IT SAYS.’"

"SIR,—It is reported of Mr. Spurgeon, on an occasion when some inquiring Christian, who had been brought up under a system of perverse 'spiritualizing' of Holy

Scripture, asked him to explain some passage in the prophecies of Isaiah bearing upon the future kingdom of Christ, that he replied, with emphasis, '*Why, it means what it says.*'

"I think that this canon of interpretation deserves more attention than it receives among the thousands who profess to accept the Old and New Testaments as the record of a divine revelation, yet who, as they term it, 'spiritualize' the prophetic Scriptures until they cease to exercise any influence upon the faith and practice of their readers.

"In opposition to this pernicious system of interpretation, it requires to be pointed out that all the prophecies which were fulfilled in the first Advent of Christ, were fulfilled in the most 'literal' sense—in His history and ministry, in His suffering of death, in His resurrection and ascension, in the foundation of His eternal Church, and in the calling of the Gentiles. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah consists of a large number of prophetic statements concerning our Lord's first Advent, every one of which received the most punctual and literal fulfilment in His history; and it was this precise fulfilment, in a literal sense, of these predictions, which carried the faith, not only of His Jewish disciples, but of His Gentile followers, such as the treasurer of Queen Candace, in the early ages of the Gospel. There was not one prediction respecting the First Advent and its results which did not receive a precise and punctual accomplishment in a 'literal' sense at the beginning of the Gospel. A 'figurative' fulfilment would never have convinced any of the Jewish literalists, nor have satisfied the critical taste of Greek and Roman inquirers. In Justin Martyr's Dialogue with *Trypho*, the Jewish adversary, of the second century, it is the literal fulfilment of prophecy which is the main argument for the faith on which Justin relies for the persuasion of his opponent.

"Now the prophecies, whose fulfilment in the most literal

sense in the First Advent of Christ became the chief instrument of conviction both among Jews and Greeks, in nearly every instance form introductory portions of inspired writings in which the remaining sections are manifestly unfulfilled. And these unfulfilled portions, in nearly every instance, relate to the Second Advent of Christ, as the great event for which the Church is 'to wait,' as the era of the world's 'regeneration.' It is impossible to deny that the apostolic writers of the New Testament, following on the four narratives of the life of our Lord on earth, one and all represent the great object of hope to be Christ's return from heaven to judge the rebellious nations, and to establish the kingdom of God in visible supremacy.

"As a matter of fact, no other expectation appears in the apostolic writings, or in the writings of early Christendom, than this of the return of the Lord Jesus from heaven at the end of Satan's kingdom—to judge the nations and to establish a supernatural and perhaps aërial reign over the earth, in conjunction with the risen saints of former generations. There is not, in either Old or New Testament, one single promise of a triumphant ending of the world's history, apart from the promise of a visible kingdom of God in the last days! There proved to be nothing incredible or impossible in God's personal and direct sovereignty over the Jewish people for fifteen hundred years, and there is nothing incredible in the expectation of that direct sovereignty being extended over the whole earth in the person of Christ in the last days, though having its centre in the land promised to Abraham for his heritage. Such a consummation of history would be simply the extension of the idea of David's divine kingdom over all the earth.

"I have only to add that all the prophets, including Isaiah, Daniel, and Zechariah down to St. John, place the commencement of this glorious age at the period when the 'Babylon' of the 'Seven Hills' shall be smitten to destruc-

tion, and when the Gospel shall have been 'preached in the whole world.'

"I know not how it is that comparatively few lay Nonconformists are persuaded to undertake a systematic and orderly study of the prophecies, pleading the follies of half-learned and eccentric interpreters as an excuse for such neglect. But no inquirer needs to be ashamed of the study, or of the conclusions which reckon among their adherents such scholars as those of our own time, who, with Sir Isaac Newton, follow in the path of all the ante-Nicene writers of Christianity in these anticipations.

"EDWARD WHITE."

Before the end of February he went to Worthing, in the hope of regaining, in that milder climate, something of his usual health. He was able to enjoy some drives in that neighbourhood in the early days of March, but then became very ill, and for a time it was feared that he might not live to return home. This illness continued for several weeks, but by the middle of April he was so much stronger that it was thought safe to take him home to Mill Hill. There, however, he had to keep in bed for a week, and not until May was well advanced was he able to resume his usual habits of reading and writing. Having then resumed those habits, he was able to persist in them to the end. His note-book covering that period contains few dates, but numerous records of his reading and thinking, and of these the greatest number relate to the Scriptures, the Gospel, and the Life eternal, to which he clearly felt himself drawing very near. Thus he wrote, probably in June: "At seventy-nine years you come very near to Eternity. In looking back, how much to lament; in looking forward, the only hope is in the reconciling and renewing agency of God. 'I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me.' The God who is here is there. He has been a merciful God here, and will 'delight in mercy' there."



In June he also wrote two letters to Mr. Hobbs, whose mission work in India from 1879 to 1884 had been under his superintendence. They indicate Mr. White's high appreciation of his work in Bengal, as well as great personal esteem, and are as follows:—

“Hilda's Mount, *June 1, 1898.*

“MY DEAR FRIENDS,—I have just been reading some MS. notes of the years when we were more closely connected in action, and this has set me on writing to you a few lines of long-standing affection, in order to obtain a little information as to your ‘state,’ as St. Paul calls it. This is my own. I am now just beginning my eightieth year, a fact which rather overawes me and will, I hope, enable you both to feel quite young people. I thank God my health is fairly strong and steady, but of course my poor wits are failing, and as to memory it is a bag full of holes. But I have had a great deal to remember in my time. However, my custom of keeping note-books of reading, thought, and action enables me to live a good many former years over again in a shadowy sort of way. But the death-roll is a long one, and would be a sad one if not for the thought that so many of the valued friends of past years are certainly safe under the shadow of the Almighty elsewhere.

“I should much like to hear from you both as to your state and occupations. Do you keep up any connection with Christians in India? Do you ever hear of any results, theological or spiritual, of your work there?

“My life here is a very quiet one; the population is small, and now that I am near eighty people do [not] think one can preach at such an age. I watch and pray for opportunities of some usefulness, but probably the work that remains from former years is the most to be accounted of. Every saved man will be astonished some day to see how God has watched over his work, that it should ‘remain,’ though lost

to history, known to Him. All here, Mrs. W. and my daughters, join in affectionate remembrance to you both, and I trust to obtain some scrap of recent autobiography from you. Ever affectionately yours,

“EDWARD WHITE.”

“June 9, 1898.

“MY DEAR FRIENDS, — Occasional correspondence should be framed on the same principle as conversation, not ending with one question and answer, but running out to one or two interchanges, giving better the idea of a conversation. Accordingly I send you an acknowledgment of your kind and pleasant letter of June 7th. It has given us great pleasure to hear again the voices which we knew and loved so well in past years.

“One or two points arise out of your letter. As to my illness : at the beginning of the year I was very seriously ill, for a month, but it pleased God to raise me up again for a while, and since then I have been a tolerable invalid, with little power of locomotion or application to study or writing ; but still able to enjoy a quiet life and the sight of friends who may kindly call upon us. Of course the openings which occur to me for any kind of usefulness are fewer and require watching. Probably the better part of my work for God, if I may venture to call it so, was in past years ; and yet I think that if we pray for it He lets us be of some use in old age. *Litera scripta manet*, and I do pray that my past *printed* work may, by God’s loving kindness, be enabled to do some good still. When *print* leaves our hands, it does not leave His, if He owns it at all. And so I trust that at least some of the printed work of former years is active still. But it is hidden from us.

“In reviewing the past, I find no reason to question that on the great matter of Immortality we were walking in the paths of the Holy Scripture. I cannot answer the

argument I often used to others: that if the Bible taught man's natural immortality, it would have expressed that idea as often and as forcibly and unmistakably as they do who hold it in our time. Its pages would have rung with appeals to sinful men to save their 'immortal souls.' They never use the argument *once* during fifteen hundred years of Revelation, from Moses to St. John; not one of the seventy sacred writers drops into that orthodox style of speech. This surely can only be because God *held them back* from presenting, as the basis of Revelation, a metaphysical *lie*. All the Midland Counties came to know that R. W. Dale was steadily a Conditionalist, and that has silenced much evil speaking, lying, and slandering. At Cambridge Professor Stokes's courageous avowal has acted similarly. But indeed when I read John vi. I wonder how the saints can be so blinded by tradition as to think that men are naturally as immortal as God, thus blinding themselves also to the leading truth respecting the Incarnation of the Life, and the abolition of death by the sacrifice of the Son.

"Now here is a piece of the old 'fanaticism' for you, which yet has cleared the way to faith to thousands in this generation.

"Love from us both to you both,

"E. W."

As earlier chapters have shown, letters from Mr. White on matters relating to Nonconformity were occasionally accepted for publication in the *Times*. The last of such letters appeared at the end of June. It was a fresh statement of his indictment of dishonest subscription by the clergy, and was as follows: "SIR,—A great company of Nonconformists are regular readers of the *Times*. As one of these may I venture to urge upon the evangelical section of Church of England men closer attention to Canon Gore's doctrine of subscription, which requires the

clergy to sign the Church standards in the 'plain grammatical sense of the words'? Not a few of us who are Nonconformists enjoyed in early life every facility for entering the ministry of the Church of England, but were hindered by conscientious objection to 'non-natural' subscription to the standards, specially on the question of regeneration in infant baptism, which is the foundation-stone of the whole theological fabric. A Church which teaches sound doctrine is bound also to teach and enforce sound morality, and in a commercial country no moral law is of more importance than that which requires simplicity of interpretation in subscription to solemn engagements. Clearly the Church of England by law established ought to set an example to the community of straightforward dealing in the use of language on the most sacred subjects, specially by the moral teachers of a commercial nation.

"If the same laxity of interpretation which is now tolerated in the Church of England were introduced into business transactions in the City of London, the commerce of the country could not be carried on for a single day. It is the vain endeavour to fight the battles of truth and righteousness in the old-fashioned armour of departed centuries which is really at the root of all our English sectarianism, both in the Established and Nonconformist Churches of the country. The spectacle in every parish of England of one State-favoured Church surrounded by a set of 'free,' but too often feeble, communities, is as unlike as possible to anything that existed in Christendom in the first two centuries of Christianity. Perhaps it is too late in the day practically to move ecclesiastical amendments, but, at least we may keep our minds clear on the questions which lie at the very foundation of morals."

This letter was the last of his writings for publication and it was printed within a month of his death.

The end came at last unexpectedly, for although it was



known that the condition of the heart was such as to make sudden death probable, there were no symptoms pointing to immediate danger on Monday, 25th July, so that no hesitation was felt about leaving home on the part of the family.

In the evening of that day his youngest daughter and a granddaughter were the only members of the family with him, when he suddenly complained of great pain in the side. He lay down on the sofa, and in a few minutes all was over.

He had already entered his eightieth year, and notwithstanding the absence of any special warning at this time, he was clearly conscious, as his note-books show, of his nearness to the end. The last date entered in the last book is that of Sunday, July 24th; and after a blank page appears the following meditation:—

“Rev. xiv. 13. ‘Their works do follow them’ (with them : ἀκολουθεῖ μετ’ αὐτῶν). The whole passage is one: ‘Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord *from henceforth*, for they rest from their labours, and their works follow with them.’ Ἀπ’ ἄρτι : *from now*. Does not this refer to the change made in the destination of holy souls in death since Christ’s ascension? ‘Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, be *with me*, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.’ And the works which ‘follow with them’ are the train of biographic memorials which ascend with them to the seat of judgement. The biography of a lifetime made visible by the Omniscient Hand, in a series of memorials which represent the past and foretell the future. And the *words* follow also, in a vast volume of articulate sounds which re-echo in music the results of their speech on earth, in words of truth, of kindness, of justice, of solid argument for the right, of tenderness for the sorrowful, of loyalty and love for God. And when He sees and hears their works and words, He says: ‘Come ye blessed of my Father,’ ye fit inhabitants

of the Jerusalem above, come join your hands in the works and your voices in the songs of angels, under the shadow of the Almighty and the love of the Eternal King of glory."

These were the last words written in the note-book, and probably the last that he ever wrote. In a letter to Mr. W. D. Knight, written only a few days before his death, he said:—

"We have not forgotten each other, I am sure, but on this planet it is necessary to say so now and then, and therefore I say it, with much reason and much affection to-day. It is a long time since we heard of your modern history. Would it be possible for you to come here for a night, both of you, and jointly repeat some chapter of ancient history? *We* are so old now that we seldom go out of these premises. But memory keeps in view lively pictures of the past, in which your faces are prominent portraits. *We* have very little to tell: of local news, nothing; of public, only that which we read in the *Times*; but some chapters of old personal history belonging to both of you it would be pleasant to read over together once more. For I suppose that even the angels in heaven will sometimes say off a chapter of former experiences, when chatting with some brother cherub in a suitable frame of mind. They cannot be always living with their strings screwed up to the last possible turn of the keys. A 'Celestial City' with no chat, but only sermons and songs, would be like an eternal Sunday with no Monday in prospect. Your engagements are many, ours are few; so do you propose a day and night and settle to give us this pleasure."

Before the suggested visit could be paid, the earthly life of the writer was finished, and only at his funeral could the friend thus invited show by his presence the esteem and affection he had for him.

The funeral took place at Mill Hill on Friday,

July 29th. The burial was in the churchyard. The service that preceded it was conducted by Dr. McClure, headmaster of Mill Hill School, and Dr. R. F. Horton, of Hampstead, who, in his address, spoke of his deceased friend as the wittiest man he had ever met. It was held in the new School Chapel, at the opening of which only a few weeks previously Mr. White had been present. Many of his old Hawley Road friends were there, as well as others, including Mr. Samuel Smith, M.P., who had been his staunch friend and helper for twenty years.

Mr. White had outlived and followed to the grave so many of his intimate friends in the ministry, that there was not one of his own generation available to conduct the funeral service, and so that duty had fallen to the two already named, who were friends of his later years and of a younger generation. One of the hymns sung during the service was composed by Mr. White as early as 1842, perhaps earlier, and is as follows:—

*"Our conversation is in heaven."*—PHIL. iii. 20.

'Tis but a veil that hangs between  
The saint and things divine;  
And beams of glory oft are seen  
Amidst its folds to shine.

Those rays on hearts of darkness fall,  
And chase the gloom within;  
With hope they waken to the call,  
And burst the chains of sin.

And hourly doth this veil unfold  
Some waiting saint to bless,  
Whom Jesus summons to behold  
His face in righteousness.

The angels bear them, one by one,  
To join the rapturous throng,  
Which round about the burning throne  
Awakes the conqueror's song.

Those holy sounds we hear not now,  
But soon the day will rise,  
When, without veil, we too shall bow,  
Amid those upper skies.

The notices of Mr. White's death that appeared in the daily and weekly newspapers, both religious and secular, were very numerous. His sterling worth and evangelical teaching were very generally recognized, with only here and there a note of discord on account of his unpopular doctrines.

Some of the older members of the Hawley Road Church felt that it would not be right to allow these Press notices to be the only outward memorial of their dear deceased friend. They therefore took counsel together, and considering the connection of Mr. White with Mill Hill School, both in the earlier and the later periods of his life, they invited the co-operation of the headmaster, Dr. McClure. After consultation with him, it was decided to place a mural tablet in Hawley Road Chapel, and to establish a scholarship, or a leaving-prize, at Mill Hill School, to be awarded for proficiency in the study of the Scriptures in the original, and to bear the name of Edward White. A circular was issued to the friends and admirers of Mr. White, bearing more than a hundred names of those who had signified their concurrence with the proposal, some of these representing the United States and Switzerland, where Mr. White's works have been highly appreciated.

The response to this circular was hearty, and the scheme was promptly carried out. On April 13, 1899, a meeting was held in the Chapel at Hawley Road, at which the mural tablet was unveiled by Dr. Newman Hall in the presence of a large number of friends and relations of the deceased minister, including his widow and several children and grandchildren.

The second part of the memorial scheme was completed a little later on. After meeting the cost of the tablet, the



main portion of the fund remaining was invested in the names of trustees, the annual income accruing from it being available as the "Edward White Scholarship." This is tenable for three years by the scholar successful in the examination provided for in the trust deed, such scholar being about to leave the school to proceed to a University.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The first to gain this scholarship was Mr. Henry Martyn Trafford, of Hornsey (son of the late Rev. John Trafford, of Serampore), who now holds it, being a student at Glasgow University.

## CHAPTER XX

### CONCLUSION

THE foregoing chapters have portrayed in the person of Edward White a faithful minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, a life animated by high and noble motives and dominated by lofty aims, a mind of more than ordinary capacity, and a character of indomitable earnestness and tenacity of purpose. Yet the picture would not be complete without some personal testimony as to other characteristics, which do not emerge from the story of his life as a public man.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the abundant power and various other qualities which are illustrated in the narrative, his many-sided personality possessed great charm and tenderness, which, however, could only be manifested in his more private and intimate social relations. His conversation was often brilliant, sparkling with wit and humour, so that, with his wide range of knowledge, both of men and of books, he was the life of any company in which he felt himself at home. His religion was joyful. No one could more thoroughly relish a good joke or more heartily laugh at an amusing story. If, as he once wrote, "It is worth half a day's journey to hear some people's laugh, such joy and music, like a peal of bells in spring," he was himself one of those whose hilarity he thus describes.

He is probably most widely known as the exponent of

<sup>1</sup> For testimony from various friends see Appendix A.

the doctrine of "Life in Christ," but those whose knowledge of him extends only to his controversial writings can have but the faintest idea of his real character. Such persons may suppose him to have been a disagreeable, contentious man, a preacher whose sermons were always bristling with controversial daggers; yet such an estimate of his character and ministry would be the very opposite of the truth. It is true that both his pen and his speech were formidable weapons, which he well knew how to use when occasion required. But as a man, he was most genial and hospitable; as a friend, most helpful and faithful; as a pastor and preacher, most earnest in the exposition and application of the great evangelical truths, with only occasional direct reference to the important controversy with which his name is so closely associated. In fact, the most salient characteristic of his pulpit ministry was the skill with which he made the Bible interesting to his hearers and understood by them. Those who knew him most intimately were those in whom he inspired the fullest confidence and the most enduring affection. Being a man of ardent temperament, quick action, and incisive speech, he sometimes said and did things which gave offence or caused pain even to his best friends. But whatever his imperfections were, his life and character were such that those who came into closest contact with him were made to feel the reality of the world unseen and the supreme importance of the spiritual and eternal verities which formed the main theme of his pulpit discourses. The freshness and originality of both thought and expression in those discourses were so striking that, besides attracting occasional listeners of widely different character and attainments, from various classes of the people, from Peers and Cabinet Ministers to artizans and cabmen, he also gradually gathered around him a Church of intelligent and appreciative men and women who were earnest Christian workers and generous supporters of all sorts of Christian



and benevolent enterprise. To this fact—the character of the Church over which he was for so many years the beloved and revered pastor—Mr. White was accustomed to attribute much of his success in breaking down prejudice with regard both to himself and to his teaching.

No man could be more generous than he was in the recognition of all aid rendered to him whether in his Church work or in the “Life in Christ” controversy. To such efficient helpers in that controversy as Messrs. Minton and Tinling in England, and Dr. Petavel and Mr. Byse on the Continent, recognition was due; but even to a much less prominent coadjutor in the cause he wrote only two days before his death, “When I open the Bible now, I often wonder how ever the main truth on ‘Life in Christ’ could have been so early lost and with such difficulty regained for Christendom. Its early loss almost logically necessitated the loss of the truth on regeneration by the Spirit and justification by grace. Well, we have both been permitted to have a place in the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem, and lived to see a good result as to the faith of the world.”

The controversy as to man’s nature and destiny with which Edward White’s name is so inseparably associated necessarily occupies considerable space in the foregoing pages; yet the book would scarcely be complete without some reference to the present position of the controversy and to its effect upon opinion generally.<sup>1</sup> The struggle which seemed almost hopeless when he entered upon it in his early manhood, was a half-won cause before he quitted the scene of conflict; not, of course, through his work alone, others had entered into his labours, and had brought welcome and efficient aid. Other influences too had been in active operation, some of them not really tending in precisely the same direction, but all preparing men’s minds for great changes in theological thought and teaching. To

<sup>1</sup> For its effect in other countries see Appendix C.



that extent it may be admitted that the *Zeitgeist* has been favourable to his enterprise, but only on its destructive and least important side.

Two, however, of the principal difficulties encountered by Mr. White, in carrying on the controversy, have not been obviated by the spirit of the age; they still remain hindrances to the acceptance of his doctrine of "Life in Christ." The first of these difficulties is that of inducing those who take part in the discussion, on either side, to perceive that it is not primarily, nor even secondarily, a negative doctrine on future punishment for the unsaved, but is firstly and chiefly a positive doctrine of immortality offered, under defined conditions, to all men without distinction, who otherwise must perish. The second relates to those who have been brought up in the belief of the Platonic but not Scriptural notion of the inherent immortality of the human soul. It is the difficulty of inducing such persons to accept the fundamental idea of the perishable nature of man, which lies at the basis of Mr. White's doctrine, an idea which seems to be clearly and tersely expressed in the words of Jesus Christ (John vi. 53): "Except ye eat . . . ye have not life in yourselves," indicating that man is not in himself immortal, but is rather in the position of a candidate for immortality, subject to conditions.

It is not, however, here contended, nor is it even supposed that Mr. White's mode of stating the case for what has been called "Conditionalism" is absolutely complete and final. Indeed, the subsequent publication of Dr. Petavel's book and the criticisms in Appendix B suffice to show that it is not so; yet even opponents admit that the cumulative force of Mr. White's arguments is very great, it is in fact much greater than any one can be aware of who has not carefully read and studied his book throughout.

Dr. Salmond, of Aberdeen, in the first edition of his work on *The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, had

treated the Conditionalist doctrine too cavalierly, and on this having been pointed out to him, he modified some of his statements in subsequent editions, and expressed the opinion that "it is capable probably of being better stated than has yet been the case."

When once urged to publish a fresh and abridged edition of *Life in Christ*, Mr. White's answer was, "Each generation must write its own books." His book was written a generation ago, and so the time may soon come for a fresh presentation of the doctrine in terms which, without invalidating the main argument of that book, will include other considerations better adapted to strike the imagination and win the assent of the men of the twentieth century.

Whoever may succeed in producing such a work will surely not fail to render due honour to his predecessor of the nineteenth century, Edward White.

# APPENDICES



## APPENDIX A

### TRIBUTES OF APPRECIATION

FROM SIR MICHAEL FOSTER, M.A., M.P., *Professor of Physiology  
in the University of Cambridge.*

I shall always look back with gratitude to the beneficial influence which Mr. White exerted over me as a lad, just beginning to think. . . . I recognized in him a broad, open mind, willing to discuss any question on its own merits and absolutely free from even the suspicion of "pontifical" airs. His experience of the manner in which his own views about "the second death" had been received by many, led him to be very tolerant towards others ; and while he was ever most clear and decided as to what he judged to be fundamental truths, he was always ready to give a patient hearing to the expression of views differing from his own, even though they might at times seem to him to be extreme in character.

His keen intellectual interest in very varied branches of knowledge, his ready appreciation of literary excellences, and his great sense of humour, while they gave him charms as a friend, added to his power in the pulpit. And it has always seemed to me a special feature in his character that just as in the midst of the freedom of social intercourse he never did or allowed anything which would depreciate his influence as a pastor, so he never permitted his being a "minister" to be in any way a bar to easy intercourse and open good fellowship. It was largely due to this that for many years after I had ceased to attend Hawley



Road, and we came to diverge more and more in our respective opinions, we remained to the end the best of friends, and always enjoyed, at least I did, the few opportunities when chance brought us together.

One special connection with him will always remain a pleasant remembrance to me. He was, as is well known, for some time editor of the *Christian Spectator*. Upon taking possession of the editorial chair, he invited me to write an article for him. If I remember right, I wrote a short paper for his very first number, and continued to contribute during, I think, the whole period of his editorship. These papers were my first literary ventures, so that he was not only my pastor but my literary father.

From P. H. PYE-SMITH, B.A., M.D., F.R.C.P., F.R.S., &c.,  
48, Brook Street.

Although Mr. White was an old and valued friend of my father for most of his life, I only knew him personally in the latter years of his ministry at Hawley Road Church. His services in the pulpit were marked by simplicity and devout earnestness. His prayers were scarcely more *ex tempore* than his sermons; both were evidently thought out before. His sermons were closely reasoned and vigorously delivered, but with little action and no extravagant changes of voice. Occasionally, however, indignation at the insolence of vice or sympathy with patient suffering and self-sacrifice would reveal itself in perfectly natural tones. He was always interesting because he was always interested himself. Perhaps the most characteristic part of Mr. White's Sunday service was the exposition of a carefully chosen and admirably read chapter. Whether the subject was historical or doctrinal, didactic or eucharistic, he showed a mastery of the facts, a familiarity with the language and circumstances of the writer, and a sympathy with the narrative, the argument, or the poetry of the passage which never failed to interest and impress.

He took much delight in the discoveries of science and of archæology, and often illustrated his discourses by reference to them, and also occasionally spoke of public events; but he never allowed a sermon to degenerate into a review of the week or a diluted version of a magazine article. For several years he gave



lectures to working men once a month on Sunday evenings. They were always full and often crowded, and here he left the form of a sermon and took any subject in science or geography or history which was likely to interest his audience. He treated it in a frankly Christian spirit and never without prayer, but not in the Biblical strain of his sermons.

With strong sympathy and a natural love of the humorous side of things, he never in conversation let pathos degenerate into spurious sensibility, nor suffered an unbecoming joke to escape him. In the pulpit there was never anything to move either tears or laughter, but there was often deep and solemn feeling, and sometimes an allusion which might prompt a smile.

Strangers were often surprised to hear nothing of Mr. White's views on the subject of the book called *Life in Christ*. He rarely expounded them in the pulpit, and only occasionally referred to them, but never pushed them forward. Some of his congregation did not share his opinions on this point, and many differed from him on the subject of baptism, but no one could touch on vexed questions with greater frankness, simplicity, and freedom from offence. Though he was a strong Protestant and Nonconformist, and was still more strongly attached to what are called evangelical doctrines, he had the most generous sympathy for all who, under whatever qualifying term, were followers of Christ. His description of a burial at sea with the service of the English Prayer-book, and his account of the Belgian priest who died of leprosy contracted in his self-imposed duties, will never be forgotten by those who heard them.

Personally, he was in every sense manly, straightforward, upright, transparent, genuine. He was, or rather, perhaps, had been, quick tempered, and was easily moved to indignation, but his heart was as tender and his nature as friendly as his head was clear. No one who knew him could help respecting him; no one who knew him well could help loving him.

From REV. J. F. B. TINLING, B.A.

It is more than thirty years since I became acquainted with Edward White (the conventional prefix does not fit his memory) and from the moment of introduction I knew him as one of the

choicest of friends. Indeed, it would be impossible to name four others who have occupied an equal place in my mind and life. While yet unacquainted with the literature of Conditional Immortality, I had been led by the Bible alone to the theological position so ably defined and defended in *Life in Christ only*, and a corresponding agreement on nearly all great questions of doctrine and practice bound me to the author by many ties.

Like all the best men, he was best at home, and so it was a delight to be with him at family worship, at the breakfast-table, or in his study. It was a home in which good servants cared to stay through many years, and in which they were treated as confidential friends. Children were free, while love and dignity maintained order and harmony, which I never saw interrupted, and secured politeness of tone and manner even from the youngest. The same spirit attained like results in the Church.

Though his genial dignity and the Attic salt of his addresses in the chair of the Congregational Union enhanced his reputation, he found himself at the autumnal session in Norwich obliged by his judgement and conscience to resist an almost unanimous desire of the assembly. For a few minutes the position was painful to all, and peculiarly difficult to the Chairman, but a happy issue was found and the climax of restored harmony was marked by hearty laughter when, with reference to the stentorian voice of one of the protesters, the Chairman summarized the incident by quoting, "The young lions roared and they suffered hunger, but they that feared the Lord have lacked no good thing."

His scholarly conservatism in the interpretation of Scripture must have helped many to resist the arrogant claims of the destructive critics; and the suggestion in one of his Merchants' Lectures, that it was time that the gentlemen who knew precisely and by instinct how the narratives of Genesis had been pieced together, should give us a few biographies like those of Abraham and Joseph, was a characteristic blend of reasoning shrewdness and humour.

He held Spiritualism in abhorrence, pointing out that it was the special offence for which the Canaanites were doomed to destruction; that in reference to it, both in Deuteronomy and Isaiah, Christ is the divinely-appointed and only permissible medium, and

that St. Paul expected a great recrudescence of spiritualism in the last days. He told privately how he had been obliged to change his early opinion that Spiritualism was a compound of fraud and folly, by demonstration of its supernatural power and evil suggestion.

"I am sixty and tired," he wrote to me twenty years ago, and long before the end he thought himself breaking up, and suffered from heart weakness and some corresponding depression. Yet his intellectual activity and his interest in other men's thoughts remained marvellously fresh. In the last year of his life, when reference was made to the many inserts of letters which were more interesting to the senders than to the receivers, he said: "I read most things that are sent to me;" and one morning now long ago, he told me he had read a book of mine of a hundred close pages, for the second time, before getting up in the morning.

It was quite natural for this man, whose intense spiritual convictions had not prevented him enjoying the society of Cardinal Manning and Dean Fremantle, to gladly permit his Methodist neighbours at Mill Hill to place his name upon their plan of local preachers when the infirmities of age had compelled him to lay aside the burdens of the Congregational pastorate.

Before this, however, came the intermediate stage of the temporary ministry at Kensington, which happily realized a wish he had expressed to me not long before, to fill some other pastoral sphere than that of Kentish Town while his working power remained. In connection with that remark I expressed surprise that he had not made the change before, and he promptly replied: "I was never asked." Men of conventional thought and speech can move easily from Church to Church, but the man whom the late Dean Alford appreciated as "one of our choicest thinkers," and whose brave, pure life and manly utterance were always worthy of his choice thought, was left to exercise his strong ministry for thirty years in a side street of Kentish Town.

For the same reasons he carried no conventional degree. The Churches are full of small "doctors" on both sides of the Atlantic, but one who profoundly influenced the theology of the last half-century, the conservative radical who insisted on proving all things and holding fast that which was good, the capable editor, the keen but always reverent controversialist, the fresh and ever-

growing student, the wise and witty essayist, who harmonized his many parts and his noble purpose so as to give the final impression of the cultured Christian gentleman, owes nothing to doubtful or arbitrary distinctions, but remains in the memory and heart of the Catholic Church simply as Edward White.

From REV. JOHN NUNN, Haverstock Hill.

I well remember Mr. White leaving Hereford soon after his change of views with regard to baptism, and his taking over of the then disused Episcopal chapel in Hawley Road, in order to form there a Congregational Union Church, but one in the designation of which baptismal distinctions should have no place.

There was for a time a lack of cordiality towards Mr. White on the part of some, due to his advocacy of Conditional Immortality, which on its negative side was seen to differ materially from the prevalent belief in the eternity of future punishment. It was overlooked that no man could hold Mr. White's view without being intensely evangelical; that the doctrine did not detract from the glory of Christ—on the contrary, that it made Christ's gift of Life not less but more. Those, however, were days of rigid doctrinal definition, and any deviation from generally accepted views was liable to be condemned as "Neology."

Mr. White gradually won the high esteem and confidence of his ministerial brethren, and at the same time gathered around him a congregation of intelligent people who valued thoughtful, Scriptural, and practical teaching, from which the Gospel of Christ as the power of God unto salvation was never absent. These found in him not only a teacher but also a kind and faithful pastor, and one who sought to make Church life and fellowship a reality. I must add, what I take to be no mean evidence of intellectual robustness and genuine kindness, that Mr. White's ministry was decidedly acceptable to working men. They liked his frankness of speech, his fairness of spirit, his mastery of subjects, and the play of humour which revealed itself in many shrewd judgements of men and things. He did not echo their class prejudices; his manifest concern was with their best interests of every kind. His monthly lectures to working men became an institution. They



took in a wide range of Biblical, social, scientific, and present-day questions, so dealt with that he "might by all means save some."

It need hardly be said that Mr. White's presence was much valued in private circles. He possessed wide knowledge and excelled in brotherly kindness. His conversation abounded in acute reasoning and practical wisdom, and often sparkled with wit which had the charm of spontaneity. He was connected with a Ministerial Fraternal, to which I also belonged, and which numbered among its members Baldwin Brown, James Fleming, Newman Hall, Joshua Harrison, Thomas Lynch, and Samuel Martin. It was through the action of this Fraternal that the so-called *Rivulet* controversy arose. The other members resented the attacks which were being made on Mr. Lynch and his little book, and protested especially against the charge of heterodoxy, which they knew to be perfectly untrue. In making this protest Mr. White took a leading part. The attacks which had been directed against Mr. Lynch were now directed against the entire Fraternal, but were so manifestly ill-natured and absurd as only to recoil on their authors, and leave the protesters unharmed. Not one of these, I think, ever regretted having come to the help of a brother so saintly and beloved as Mr. Lynch.

I offer these brief memoranda to enable those who did not know Mr. White, the better to understand what manner of man he was. He will be recognized as one possessed of strong individuality, who was saved from isolation by his equally strong sympathies, which brought him into touch with all good men, and into lasting friendship with those who knew him best. He was profoundly reverent and devout, but also hopeful and confident, because he *realized* eternal things and "endured as seeing Him who is invisible." We must needs think of him as among the teachers and pastors divinely given for the work of ministering, and for the edifying of the body of Christ. May the Churches have many preachers as mighty in the Scriptures as he, and shepherds as careful of the flock! I end by expressing my deep sense of his worth as a man, a Christian, and a Christian minister, and of the privilege which I enjoyed in knowing him as one of a band of kindred spirits, all of whom have now "gone before" into the presence of the Lord.

FROM REV. D. BASIL MARTIN, M.A., Hereford, *formerly  
Assistant to Mr. White at Hawley Road.*

In common with many others, I was attracted to Edward White more by his personality than by his theology. His independence of character, sincerity of purpose, and bright, breezy ways had a peculiar charm for those who felt stifled and depressed by the usual atmosphere of the Churches.

Of all the men I have known he was the most manly. His massive head and handsome Jewish face, set on large, square shoulders, his sturdy figure and firm step, his quick, eager glance, were the outward and visible signs of inward strength, determination, and mental vision.

He was unconventional; he knew no bondage to form and fashion, Nonconformist or otherwise; he said what he meant, regardless of consequences; he spoke in the same tone in the pulpit and out of it. In days when disciples were few, income small, and efforts discouraging, he would not compromise a word for the sake of conciliating opponents or winning public support. He stood forth as a prophet with a message to proclaim to those who had ears to hear; as one sent by God, like Jeremiah, whose words he often quoted: "to root out and to pull down, to destroy, to build and to plant," for it must be confessed that although his teaching was constructive and he much disliked to be known by his negations, his tone was frequently that of a fervent iconoclast.

He was a man of devout spirit and deep reverence, a disposition which he imparted to his congregation. To see him walk into the church on Sunday morning and observe the expression of his face throughout the service was enough to make one feel how conscious he was of the dignity of his office, the serious responsibility of leading the worship of Almighty God and speaking to his fellow-men upon the mysteries of time and eternity. He worked hard at his sermons, and threw his whole soul into them. The thoroughness with which he studied his subject and the fearlessness with which he expressed his convictions made almost every topic interesting. He could not pour out conventional phrases which might take the fancy of his congregation, he must give the very best he had in all humility and love.

His reverence was founded on study and reflection, on a knowledge of natural science and history, no less than theology. His mind was overwhelmed with the vastness of creation, the incomprehensibility of the infinite Will, the strange movements of Providence, and the wondrous love manifested in man's redemption. His study of astronomy gave him an unusual feeling of awe and wonder. To his mind the very God who made and governed those countless worlds of glory in the heavens had given His Son that sinful, dying men might share His own eternal life, and he regarded the formation and growth of the kingdom of God as recorded in Holy Scripture and in the history of the Church as one continuous miracle.

There was a tone of sincerity and common-sense in the services at Hawley Road. Hymns of excessive emotion and fictitious or doubtful sentiment were excluded ; the reading of the Scriptures was interspersed with pithy explanatory remarks, and the prayers were an expression of genuine feeling. He was one of the first of our ministers to introduce a portion of the Anglican liturgy into public worship, and other parts of the service showed his familiarity with the devotional literature of the universal Church.

Everything about him was real. His lectures were lectures and his sermons sermons. If he announced a lecture on "The Mouth" or "The Stars," you might expect a scientific discourse to illustrate the works of God in Nature, not an evangelical appeal with a few poor scraps of physiology or astronomy thrown in.

He never indulged in catch-titles or laid traps for the unwary. He appealed to the intelligence of his audience and won their respect. It is one thing to give an artisans' lecture and another to lecture to artisans. Workmen are often conspicuous by their absence in the services arranged for their special benefit. But they came from all parts of London to hear Edward White, not because they believed all he said, but because he was interesting and genuine. He took them through a considerable portion of the history of England as well as that of the Jews and early Church on Sunday evenings. He also lectured on distinguished men of modern times. It was on the occasion of his lecture on

Lord Shaftesbury that I remember his saying, "The second lesson this evening will be taken from the *Times* newspaper." He often said that Church history and missionary records were but a continuation of the Acts of the Apostles, and ought to be read at public worship. Once he remarked that if he had his life to live over again he would live to teach men history.

His relation to the world in general may be perhaps summed up in one of his own pithy phrases: "I have spent the last forty years in preaching faith mixed with oxygen."

He was a born humourist, and his very humour revealed his sincerity, it was so straightforward and happy. He enjoyed his own jokes. To see him throw back his head and laugh after making some clever remark that would shock the proprieties of pious folk, or to hear him prattle with the lightheartedness of a schoolboy, was as good as a sea-breeze.

Life grew more interesting to him year by year, and every springtime seemed more beautiful than the last. On his sixtieth birthday he exclaimed: "Oh how I envy you fellows who are not sixty!"

A brilliant talker and letter-writer, if only there had been a Boswell behind his chair, we should have a second *Life of Johnson* in our hands.

In sympathy and personal judgements he was broad-minded and generous, and frequently said that "all good men were much alike inside." He had little love of sectarianism. Though he strongly disbelieved in infant baptism and refused to practise it, he deprecated the division on the subject and said it was "as absurd to call yourself a Baptist as a Lord's Supperist."

He was a Nonconformist only because his conscience compelled it; personal tastes and inclination would have made him an Anglican, like so many of his friends. He had great love for the historic Church and the historic faith.

He was an earnest student of the Bible, and never happier than when expounding it. He liked to take long paragraphs and give the general sense. He complained of the disastrous results of preaching from separate texts and the absence of systematic instruction in our Churches. His own faith in divine revelation, he said, was due to his constant habit of reading the



whole Bible in order in the original Hebrew and Greek. It was on the Bible that his theology was founded, and those who have not studied his arguments have little idea of the strength of his position from that point of view.

But few men base their beliefs on a critical investigation of Scripture even when they think they do; and since Edward White's ministry began a wave of human feeling has passed over theological thought which has made it for many as difficult to believe in the destruction of the wicked as in their endless torture. Hence it came about that while in the first part of his life Edward White was considered a heretic, in the latter part he seemed conservative, though he himself had not changed.

But we of a later generation have little idea of the relief his teaching brought to some minds fifty years ago. It was in Hereford that his life-long opinions were formed or matured, and there is still with us a lady who remembers as a child the sermons in which he first expounded his doctrine of Life in Christ. She tells how shocked her parents were, and whilst they were sorrowfully discussing the subject at dinner, her little soul was in a tumult of excitement and joy at the light which was breaking through the beliefs that to her were such a terror.

Few ministers have been loved more devotedly and even passionately than Edward White. He was known to his own congregation not so much as a clever controversialist and earnest fighter for the truth, as a sincere friend, a man of God, and one to whom the spiritual world was unusually real. If ever a man could be at home in heaven it would be Edward White. One whose mind was so often absorbed in the contemplation of realities, who loved the society of good men of every order, whose favourite motto was: "Live now as you would like to live for ever. Do not prepare to die, prepare to live. If you are fit to live in this world, you are fit to live in any world."

I have never heard any one talk in such a natural, realistic way about the future life, and in his later years it was a favourite topic, when, as he used to say, so many of his best friends had migrated either to Hampstead or to heaven.

The last letter that I received from him concluded with the following words: "If among the older Christians of Hereford any

remain who remember me and the word I spake unto them, tell them that I am drawing very near the end, in ever-growing faith in that Saviour who is alive for evermore."

From the REV. CHARLES WILLIAMS of Accrington. *President in 1886 of the Baptist Union.*

I had the valued privilege and great pleasure of more than friendly acquaintance with the late Rev. Edward White. To me the friendship was the more precious because it was not the outcome of agreement as to his well-known doctrine of "Life in Christ." I realized greater difficulty than he in believing that God would destroy the life of unbelievers. I mention this fact because it illustrates Mr. White's breadth of mind and largeness of heart. He was by many years my senior and in every respect my superior. All who knew him must remember his intense earnestness of belief in the doctrine of which he was the chief exponent. And yet he never allowed my inability to accept his teaching, or my persistent opposition to it, to alienate him from me or to lessen his confidence in me. We often discussed, and sometimes with unrestrained freedom and no little plainness of speech, the points in dispute between us; but he never permitted differences to divide us. I ever admired in him the love which "doth not behave itself unseemly" and which "never faileth." He did to others what he would that men should do to him, and thus fulfilled "the law and the prophets." Mr. White ever conceded what he claimed, and was as charitable as he was conscientious.

My friend was intensely evangelical. I doubt whether, except on the question of "Life in Christ," there was a more "orthodox" believer in the ministry of our Free Churches than Mr. White. To him the Scriptures were the sole as well as the supreme written standard of Christian truth. His reverence for and loyalty to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ were unbounded. What impressed me most in Mr. White was his absolute loyalty to self and Christ. He could not "make his judgement blind." His mind was always open to the truth. The light within craved more light from above and from without.

“Are these things so?” was the question which he asked. Ascertained fact never left him dubious. “Is it true?” he demanded. When the answer was “Yes” he gave a welcome to the stranger and henceforth he was its friend. If necessary he would stand alone in championing an unpopular cause. He loved the truth, was never ashamed of it, cheerfully suffered for its sake, was ready to lay any offering within his power on its altar, and, martyr-like, he could not but speak the things which he had heard and seen, whatever might be the cost of fidelity to self. This showed the measure of the man, entitled him to a place among the heroic, and made him trustworthy.

I cannot close this brief and inadequate appreciation of my friend without reference to the companionship which I remember vividly and gratefully, and to fellowship in good works which was and is helpful to me. What a delightful companion Edward White was! How genial and gentle, how widely read and suggestive, how sunny and sage-like; how tender yet stalwart he was! I shall never forget a holiday we shared together in the New Forest; the quiet hours of converse at the fire-side, his cheerful talk, wise counsel, sparkling wit and humour, and never-failing resource. Riper fruit was not lacking in him. “By their fruits shall ye know them,” said Jesus of prophets. “Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?” Men gathered grapes of this branch of the true vine.

At the time of the cotton famine in Lancashire, in the early sixties, Mr. White visited me at Accrington. He was deeply moved by the self-respect and courage with which operative spinners and weavers endured poverty, took immense pains to discover the nature and extent of their destitution, saw with his own eyes the homes of the workpeople, heard them tell the story of their sufferings, and pleaded their cause with rare persuasive-ness and power. His article in the *Christian Spectator*, “The Silent Mills,” called forth generous responses from hundreds of readers. Many a burden was made lighter, many a heart was cheered, many a home was brightened, many a housewife renewed her faith and hope, and many a man fought his battle with more of bravery and with greater confidence in final victory through the loving and considerate ministrations of Mr. White.

He sent again and again and yet again unto their need, had real fellowship with them, and while the mills were silent, thanksgiving was heard in scores of homes for the things which came from Mr. White and his friends, "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing unto God."

Here I stop. I might speak of our common interest in foreign missions, of the quenchless enthusiasm of Mr. White in seeking the extension of the kingdom of God among men, of the manner in which he laboured as well as prayed for the fulfilment of the divine purpose concerning the salvation of all men and the evangelizing of the whole world. But others, doubtless, have borne their testimony to his zeal in the greatest of all enterprises, the making disciples of all the nations. I therefore close this tribute to my friend, lamenting that we are parted for a time and rejoicing in the hope that we shall meet again in the heavenly mansion of our Father's House.

From the REV. NEWMAN HALL, LL.B., D.D.

Before his death, Dr. Newman Hall expressed to the author his desire that in this book his high appreciation of Edward White should appear. In his *Autobiography* there is, at page 305, a warm testimony of his friendship. Also in the course of his speech at the unveiling of the memorial tablet in Hawley Road Chapel he said :—

"We meet to unveil a memorial tablet to Edward White. But a far more enduring memorial is the abiding influence of his teaching in the minds of tens of thousands by his writings; and a deeper and more sacred memorial in the hearts of those who knew him personally and loved him well.

"I have enjoyed the privilege of brotherly intercourse with him during thirty years. He has aided me by his counsel, cheered me by his sympathy, instructed me by his learning and genius: we have laughed together, and wept together, and prayed together; and hoping to be made more meet for the inheritance of saints in light, I rejoice in hope of fellowship together in the blessed company of those who share the Eternal Life in Christ.

"I am specially indebted to him for clearer and happier views



of Immortality, based not on philosophical or scientific theories, but on the fact of Christ's Resurrection, and His assurance 'he that believeth on Me shall never die': also I have been led to hope that the coming of Christ to set right all that is wrong, does not necessarily wait a vast interval of preparation, but may possibly be near.

"With his name I associate learning without pedantry, genius without pride, laughter without folly, criticism without spite, piety without formalism, conviction without narrowness, saintliness without sourness, godliness pervading his humanness.

"How I have enjoyed the flashes of his genius, the joyousness of his laugh, the depth of his sympathy, his scorn of all meanness and pretence, his admiration of all goodness—how I have profited by his comments on the Holy Book, and above all by his prayers: his soul-thrilling aspirations of praise; his outbursts of trust and love and hope in the immediate Presence of the Great High Priest!"

## APPENDIX B

### CONDITIONALISM AND CURRENT THOUGHT, BEING AN ANALYSIS AND CRITICAL ESTIMATE OF MR. WHITE'S BOOK *LIFE IN CHRIST*

By Rev. WM. D. McLAREN, M.A.

THE remarkable volume entitled *Life in Christ*, whose origin, appearance, and reception have been told in the foregoing pages, undoubtedly constituted the chief life work of the author, both in his own regard and in that of the public. Special analysis of it has therefore been reserved for this appendix with the object of examining the relation of its main contentions to current thought. Reperusal after more than twenty years only serves to exhibit afresh the vigour and completeness which characterize the volume. It is divided into five books of unequal length, dealing with the question of human destiny: 1st, as regarded in the light of science and philosophy only; 2nd, as viewed by the Old Testament Scriptures; 3rd, as involved in the Christian teaching on Incarnation and Redemption; 4th, as asserted in the New Testament doctrine of penalty; and 5th, as bearing on the faith and practice of mankind.

Mr. White's main contention is that the deathlessness of the personal self in man depends on that union with God in Christ, of which the special conditions are set forth in the New Testament, and which may be attained or forfeited accordingly. He makes Immortality the supreme offer of the Gospel and the loss of Immortality its supreme threat, and understands the Scriptural phrase "Eternal LIFE" and its opposites in this sense. Beyond the existence of God, the existence of moral good and evil, with the implication of human freedom and accountability, no further religious assumptions are made in the volume. The author

shows throughout his own profound faith in the authority of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures ; but no part of his argument depends upon a previous acceptance of this authority, for which, as he himself says, an honest and clear interpretation of their contents is the best evidence. To those who with him accept that authority, his arguments may carry more weight, but to those who do not, the view exhibited as that of the Scriptures is commended on account of its intrinsic reasonableness. Throughout, the necessity for a clear, consistent, and moral theology is kept side by side with the attempt at a clear contextual interpretation of Scripture.

In opening this treatise, Mr. White confronts us with the alternative of ultimate extinction of life or immortality as the two possible conceptions of human destiny, and suggests the connection of morality with the alternative, "Moral evil shutting the gate of Immortality." The subsequent chapters indicate the presence in germ in the lower animals of the distinctive human characteristics, and in spite of this their universal mortality without any appearance of survival. The conclusion drawn in chapter iv. is that nature and science unassisted leave human origin, relationship, and destiny absolutely uncertain, throwing us over on an alleged religious revelation.

Having noted the fact of the amazing myriads concerned in the divine government of man, Mr. White proceeds to exhibit the traditional interpretation attached to Bible treatment of destiny, and chiefly its insistence on necessary deathlessness as part of the Scriptural threat of death. Tracing modern modifications, he pertinently asks whether the whole of this interpretation may not, like many others now discarded, be a huge error. He ascribes to its prevalence the widespread European abandonment of the Gospel. Finally he discusses the contention for necessary immortality, on the grounds of the moral and spiritual nature of man. Confessing these valid for a judicial survival or revival, he pronounces them worthless to prove absolute deathlessness, and cites the admission of leading conservative theologians of his own day that no such deathlessness is taught or necessarily assumed in any part of the Bible. The way is thus opened for the author's own examination.



In dealing with the Old Testament doctrine of man, Mr. White indicates his view of the place and purpose of the Old Testament, and its consistent exclusion of all idea of inherent deathlessness. His definition of "death" is open to objection, as we shall see. His treatment of survival as due to redemption still more so.

Chapter xii. contains an excursus on the reality and function of diabolic agency in the scheme of human probation.

Our author's acceptance of the traditional treatment of the Old Testament books does not lessen the force of his exegesis of the opinions ascribed to patriarchs and lawgivers. These he clearly shows to involve the thought of death, in an absolute sense, as the reward of sin. His subsequent treatment of the prophetic books is even more convincing, and will not to-day be so disputed as twenty years ago. His two points, that God's saints did anticipate a future life, and that sinners would be cut off from it, are argued with some cogency. A chapter on the divided Jewish opinion at the time of our Lord closes this section.

Taking up the discussion of New Testament teaching, Mr. White opens with what may be called a frank and explicit statement of the central position of the book, viz., that immortality for man is the object of the Incarnation of the Son of God. Noting the prevalent antipathy to incarnation, he traces that doctrine through the Synoptists, and its emphatic presentation in the Fourth Gospel. The treatment here is unaffected by questions of literary criticism. Unitarianism is ascribed to the absence in his time of any clear and unanimous teaching as to the object of the Incarnation. Life for the dying he conceives as the only object worthy of so stupendous an act. Two valuable appendices are attached to this the seventeenth chapter, one a caustic exposure of the inadequacy of popular theology as an interpretation of John vi., and the other on later Rabbinical teaching as to Pharisaism.

The chapter on Justification vigorously defends the evangelical forensic doctrine, but connects it with the Mystical Union between Christ and His people in a way not possible when the Justification is treated as the deliverance from the woes of a deathless soul



instead of as the free gift of Life to a dying soul. This same distinction is then employed to justify the doctrine of redemption by penal expiation in the death of Christ. The ideas of divine implacability on the one hand and of forgiveness without expiation on the other, are both set aside. Penal expiation is set forth not as mere sufferings, however spiritual, in the room of the condemned, but as the endurance by the incarnate God of His own death penalty. This for the twofold purpose of expressing His own horror at sin and His desire to save the sinner. What this implies in the death of Christ has been one of the chief points of attack on Mr. White's book. Similar treatment is next accorded to the doctrine of regeneration. This is argued to mean the real bestowment of immortality by imparting not so much a new kind of life as the conditions of permanency of life. This at least is the view substantially, though rather more vaguely, presented in the text. The unregenerate are "dead," not in the sense of spiritually torpid, but in the sense of meriting imminent dissolution. Human constitution is again here dealt with, and in violent contradiction to present popular belief, the divine Fatherhood of ungodly men is repudiated.

In continuing the discussion of the bearings of immortality on the general scheme of doctrine, Mr. White is now forced to examine the question of Hades. He ably reviews the theological and Scriptural evidence for non-survivalism, the doctrine of some of his associates, who believe in the complete cessation of life for all men between their bodily death and the universal resurrection. This evidence he pronounces insufficient, holding the position of ordinary Christian teaching as fully established. The suggestion is made that it is needless to assume uniformity in the immediate state of the departed whether amongst the saved or the lost. Reasons are given for the existence of the Hades state in the economy of redemption, and an attempt is made to harmonize the admission of survival with the author's previous position on the constitution of men.

This is followed by an attempt to maintain the evangelization of the ignorant in the disembodied state, on grounds which, however, distinguish this view from any theories of universally continued probation. This section of the work closes with an

exposition of the author's views on the resurrection and the second advent.

So far doctrinal considerations have been favourable. But is there not strong New Testament doctrine to the contrary in the teaching on future punishment, both as conscious and as eternal? The fourth book deals at length with this matter. After repudiating the popular error that Conditionalism is a mere theory of future punishment, Mr. White emphasizes the need for a clear, strong doctrine of doom, and then exhibits the New Testament teaching as to the awfulness and finality of the fate of the lost. There follows a careful examination of the terms describing the nature of the doom as "death," and an exposure of the hollowness of evasions, whether orthodox or universalist, which assume the deathlessness of the "death"-doomed spirit. After exhibition of the anticipative use of the term "death," the collateral ideas of ruin and wretchedness and the relation of the actual doom to the spiritual condition are carefully analyzed. The alternative finally presented is not of inclusion or of exclusion of the supposed spiritual senses of "life" and "death," but of inclusion or exclusion of the literal, which carries the spiritual with it as its condition.

The New Testament texts adduced for endless suffering are then taken up by our writer, who, though with some oscillation, decides on the final and endless meaning of *aiōnios*, but enforces the doom as an endless loss of life, not as an endless life of loss. The same treatment is pertinently accorded by contextual examination to all the passages in question.

An interesting sketch of patristic literature and the corruption of Church doctrine is given in chapter xxvi. The fluctuation of some noteworthy Fathers is observed, and the clearness of others whose teaching is important from being given, not as private speculation, but as the then Catholic Faith. Discussion on doom is closed by a severe handling of the postulates, the methods, and the results of the teaching known as Universalism.

The last book of the volume, in four able chapters, treats of the effects of the disputed doctrine on Christian life and faith; on ungodly men; on the missionary enterprise; and on modern scepticism.

In addition to the discussion of interesting points, such as the reason for the resurrection of the wicked, prominence is given to the proper place of fear in religion; to the importance of a presentable view of the divine character, especially the divine love; to the true place of the moral reason in theology, and its relation to the Scripture; to the coherency of theology upon a Conditionalist exegesis; and to the credibility of miracle when regarded as the expression, in the natural world, of life provided for morally death-deserving men.

The book ends with praise to Christ as the life-giver.

In his preface to the third edition Mr. White complains of misconstructions, which he attempts to remove. We still find his doctrine accused of reducing man to the level of the brutes, treating immortality as a new and alien element added to the human constitution; of creating two intrinsically different classes of people; of insisting chiefly on annihilation, and so forth. A reference to the above summary will indicate the inaccuracy of these contentions and the places in the volume where they are dealt with. Mr. White complains that his main contention has not been faced by his critics, either on the Biblical or the theological side. This is still the case, as may be seen by reference to the relative literature of the last twenty years. Attention is usually drawn to details on the interpretations of special texts, or to the questions arising from the consideration of the intermediate state, or to the theoretical possibilities of annihilation, instead of to the serious refutation of the principal position.

That there are weak points in the general argument for Conditionalism, and also in Mr. White's presentation of it, is obvious. Chief amongst these is the difficulty in accounting for the spiritual survival of a composite being. In Mr. White's treatise, his definition of death as a dissolution of the man and of the survival of the spirit as compatible with it, appears quite inconsistent with his contention that the second death is incompatible with any survival. The death of Christ when treated as the penalty for sin also raises the difficulties which surround the question as to whether His human spirit died in the sense

attributed by Mr. White to the second death. This can probably be met by the affirmation of the persistence of a lifeless spirit whose reanimation took place along with that of His body. Our author leaves this vague. It would have been better, perhaps, if he had frankly accepted the popular philosophy which confines personality to the spirit, embodied or not, and treated the death of the body as an instalment and premonition of the death of the spirit in the same sense. This is virtually done in discussing the second death.

Mr. White's usage of the term "death" is really consistent throughout, but this is concealed by an attempt at a definition of the constitution of man and of the relations of the spirit and body. Those who are fond of pointing out such flaws should recollect how much less consistent and indefinable is the usage of Mr. White's opponents. Equally unintelligible is any doctrine of the place of the body, present or future, in the human constitution as exhibited by opponents. All controversialists would do well to remember that "life" and "death" are elementary terms of speech, have therefore no synonyms or definitions, and are strictly correlative, the only variation being in matters to which they are applied. In ordinary speech "death" in every case is the total and real loss of life in that of which alone it is affirmed. Seldom in any serious fashion do his antagonists deal with our author's main contention, that these terms occurring in the Bible refer *not to limited religious functions but to the entire personality*. Instead of this we too often find derision of the substitutes "existence" and "annihilation," which thoughtless advocates of the doctrine have sometimes used as definitions of "life" and "death." Whether or not a lifeless spirit can still exist, the thought of its death is quite distinct from its annihilation and precisely analogous to the thought of the death of the body or of anything else. A careful examination of Scripture teaching, with a view to proving from the context, in opposition to Mr. White, that the threats of death and destruction to the soul are intended to apply only to its religious functions and not to itself, has rarely or never been attempted.

Frequent discussions from time to time have appeared on the theological bearings of Conditional Immortality, but have



generally been confused by some of the misconceptions already adverted to, and they fail to grapple in any comprehensive way with the general arguments of Mr. White. All the weakness of special interpretations and all the implications on collateral topics put together afford a very slight ground for opposition to the evidence brought forward by Mr. White as to the real teaching of the Christian standards. Considerations of this kind evade but do not meet the main point, viz., whether the language of Christ and His apostles is to be understood in this same sense as the same words of other teachers when directed to the same subject, or are to be taken in a limited religious significance.

Considerable theological changes have taken place in the public mind since the last issue of *Life in Christ*; chief of these has been the different attitude now assumed towards the authority of Scripture. Scientific and some unscientific criticism as to the structure of various books of the Bible, and the realization of its fallibility on non-religious subjects, and of the gradual progress of religious revelation, have unsettled the public mind even of the Church on the doctrinal authority of the prophets and apostles, and have confirmed outsiders in questioning the authority of Christ Himself. While in some senses this may weaken the interest of those who see no cause to trouble themselves about the teaching of a fallible book, and so cease to care about "proof texts" from Gospel and Epistle, there is, on the other hand, a greater freedom from the desire to pervert the sense of writings that were supposed to be authoritative. This freedom leaves the mind more open to perceive the harmony of the different parts of Scripture doctrine and the clearness of the context on the question of "Eternal Life," and this honest and clear interpretation will bring back the sense of Scriptural authority as Mr. White's book reiterates. In this way while the force of certain texts may have gone, the cumulative argument remains in full force.

The next great change to be noted is the progress and initial decline of Universalism. This doctrine, basing itself on the Divine Fatherhood, has won its way through all the Churches, and is to be found in the most unexpected quarters. Those who dare not affirm yet accept it. Those who cannot accept yet

desire it. Those who still profess the traditional faith on destiny rarely do more than allude to that faith. Uncertainty and silence prevail where Universalism is not taught. In many cases this uncertainty has become dogmatic, and the superficial view of destiny as a mere question of future punishment, on which we may toss up and down opinions like jugglers' balls, has left the Church destitute of practical teaching on judgement to come. Within the last decade, however, a reaction has plainly set in, not great or rapid, but steadily increasing. Universalism is felt to be inadequate to account for the graver facts of life, and to be ineffectual in rousing and convincing the careless. Notably the universality of the Divine Fatherhood in any vital sense has come to be questioned even in those schools of the prophets where it has been reiterated to weariness, and it begins to appear simpler to deny to God the Fatherly relationship to some men than to attribute to Him such a discharge of it, in relation to this life, as would be inconceivable in any righteous father. In this way the stock argument of Universalists has begun to recoil on themselves, and men's attention may now be enlisted for what was once regarded as the "miserable doctrine of annihilation."

Public interest, which had subsided after the controversies of the seventies, has been reawakened to some extent by the issue of such works as Mr. Gladstone's annotated *Butler* and *Studies Subsidiary*, Dr. Salmond's erudite treatise on the *Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, and Dr. J. Agar Beet's two recent books on the subject. The recurrent investigation of Atonement and the persistent affirmation by Evangelicals of its penal character, notwithstanding widespread popular denial, has also forced the Church to a reconsideration of what the penal effect of sin really is. Still more plainly is the question forced in view of the obviously evil effects of a generation of silence on a doctrine of doom. Within and without the Church men cry, "What does your religion really teach on human destiny?" The teachers are silent, or utter faint and feeble contradictions.

Outside the Church, perhaps the most potent factor in modern thought has been that of biological evolution. Its emphasis on the relation of man to the sub-human races tells against the sharp distinction drawn between them by the Universalist, who

makes all men as men to be deathless Sons of God. Its doctrines of genetic progress on the other hand, and survival of the fittest, obviously harmonize with the thought of an immortality conditioned on the use made of the latest development of that distinctively human feature, the completed reason and moral sense. The focussing of its interests on the subject of life at once suggests the thought that Christianity is the crown of biology. The earliest and the latest chapters of Mr. White's book show clearly that much of this had already been detected by him, though his dread of a debasing materialism, and his excessive estimate of the historic value of the Old Testament narratives somewhat checked the working out of this line of thought. It is clear that he also forecast the present state of practical opinion, and wrote with that issue in view.

What is needed to make this doctrine the accepted faith of Protestant Christendom within the next forty years is a sharp, short presentation on the following lines.

First, there must be clear distinction made between the main and minor points. Questions of the intermediate state; of a continued probation; of the methods and degrees of conscious suffering in the execution of the final death; of the special classes finally regarded as possessing or lacking a saving faith in God; and of the issue of the second death, whether in the persistency or the annihilation of the lifeless essence of the personality: These, however intrinsically interesting to popular curiosity or philosophic inquiry, must be, for the time at least, set aside or treated in subordination to the cardinal issue. That issue is, whether a final separation between two classes of men is or is not taught by Christ, and whether the alternative be two states of life or be life and death respectively. That is a question to be settled by the ordinary rules of the context, and not by philosophical or theological assumptions. If these be set aside the result ought to be more or less ascertainable by ordinary Bible readers, when once the question is clearly put to them. This result will not in any way be affected by modern Biblical criticism, nor by the abandonment of certain passages wrongly used on this side or that.

Two Scriptural difficulties chiefly hinder acceptance of Con-

ditionalism amongst those who are more anxious to receive and understand New Testament doctrine than to achieve in the first place a harmonious theology. Of these, the first is the notion that the plain teaching of Christ on the endlessness of penalty presupposes an endless life of the lost, and therefore a restricted sense of a spiritual character on the endless life promised to the redeemed. This objection usually vanishes as soon as it is perceived that proof of the endlessness of a penalty is no proof of the endlessness of life in that penalty, if that penalty be death. Just as the antithesis of Matthew xxv. 46 forbids us to understand its "Eternal Life" as a life of punishment, so it forbids us to regard the eternal punishment as a punishment of "life." The other great objection of ordinary Bible readers to Conditionalism lies in the instinctive dread of losing the rich, spiritual sense usually attributed to the terms Life and Death. This fear is removed when it is seen that this "spiritual sense" is far more clearly established and enforced when it is regarded as the explicit condition rather than as the exclusive content of the promised Life and threatened Death, when these are understood in the absolute sense.

The chief theological objections are derived from the divine character and benevolence generally, man's likeness to God, and man's supposed relation to God and to God's purpose. Conditionalism is represented as charging God with unfatherly conduct in the death of His children, with failing in His purpose, and with mechanically ending what He cannot mend. If, however, sonship be taken as the goal and not as the starting-point of humanity, potential rather than actual, achieved not by normal progress but by redemption and regeneration from a lapse into atavism; and if superabundant mercy be shown even during their lifetime to those who finally commit suicide, then God is neither unjust nor unloving, nor does He fail in His purpose of creating out of the human material a family of divine sons. Nor is His action mechanical when it is so obviously constitutional.

Such a presentation of the doctrine of Conditional Immortality offers the following advantages: (1) It recognizes a second death as an endless penalty, while at the same time it realizes the final extinction of evil, so prominent in the New Testament and in the prophets, as achieved not by the conversion but by the death of



the impenitent. Both theologically and exegetically it thus removes the basis of dogmatic uncertainty found by pitting various passages of Scripture against each other. (2) It meets all the contentions in favour of the alleged spiritual senses of Life and Death, not by refuting them but by incorporating them as the conditions of the immortality really in question. (3) It gives cohesion to Christian doctrine by making the Incarnation, Redemption, and Regeneration to be respectively the introduction of life to a race which was losing it, the deliverance of life by a representative life laid down, and the recommunication of individual life, through a uniting trust in the Life-giver. (4) It satisfies the prevalent trend of thought which requires intelligible stages of progress and conditions of fitness for survival, and at the same time demands that theological opinion shall be strictly ethical. (5) It gives an intelligible place to miracle, especially the Life-declaring miracle of Christ's resurrection, as the symbol and sample in the material sphere of mercy for the dying. Miracle thus becomes correlative to the rigid uniformity of law, usually adduced against it. The one carried out into the moral sphere spells death to the unfit, the other points to the merciful provision for the regaining of life forfeited. (6) And lastly it presents a view of the divine character, intelligible in its purpose of producing likeminded sons, awful in the righteousness which that likeness must express, and stupendous in the love which became incarnate among the dying, undergoing for them their death so as to lift them up into its own endless life and blessedness. Such a presentation of the teaching of Mr. White's book ought not to find it difficult either to vanquish the expiring tradition of the past, or the overweening confidence of present Universalism. The day has come for demanding the Gospel of Conditionalism, and the Gospel for the day cannot express itself otherwise than in terms of Conditional Immortality. That this is now the case is in no small measure due to the prayerful energy, ardour, loving devotion and persevering acumen displayed in the volume entitled "*Life in Christ*," by Edward White.

## APPENDIX C

### INFLUENCE OF EDWARD WHITE ABROAD

THE influence of Edward White's theological labours has reached far beyond our own borders. In various degrees and in different ways it has affected the Continent of Europe and parts of Asia, Africa, and America.

On the European continent our neighbours who use the French language have been more fully than any others under the influence of Edward White's teaching, since it has there been most ably represented by two sympathetic and admirably equipped Swiss theologians, Rev. Emmanuel Petavel, D.D., and Rev. Charles Byse, both of whom had lived in London in frequent communication with Mr. White and had become thoroughly conversant with his views and with the course of the controversy.

Before he knew Mr. White's views, Dr. Petavel had himself attained the conviction that the end of impenitent sinners would be complete destruction, not eternal sufferings ; but it was from Mr. White that he learnt to look at the question from the other side and to recognize that the purpose of the divine Incarnation was to make eternal life possible for repentant believers, this being the really effective side of the Conditionalist doctrine. By his accurate scholarship, great literary skill, and personal zeal, Dr. Petavel has succeeded in making a profound impression upon the French-speaking theological world.

Introduced by Dr. Petavel to Mr. White, Mr. Byse quickly assimilated the ideas embodied in his teaching, having already reached a somewhat similar point of view under the influence of a remarkable thinker, his friend Henry de May. After the

publication in 1875 of *Life in Christ*, Mr. Byse, at Dr. Petavel's suggestion, undertook to translate that book into French. This was done later on from the third edition, issued in 1878, the translation being condensed, introduced by an elaborate preface by the translator, and published in Paris early in 1880.

A few details respecting the abundant and efficient labours of these two friends and representatives of Edward White may interest the readers of the foregoing biography.

The first publication in which Dr. Petavel enunciated the principles of Conditionalism was a pamphlet of 75 pages containing a lecture delivered by him at Neuchâtel, his native town, on March 6, 1869, and entitled *La Loi du Progrès*. In that lecture the subject was only slightly touched upon, but it was dealt with in a more formal and direct manner in a paper read before the Theological Society of Neuchâtel on July 12, 1870. This essay, together with a number of objections to which it gave rise on the part of members of the Society and the author's replies, was published two years later as a handy little book of 200 pages with the title, *La Fin du Mal*. An English translation of this work was afterwards published, entitled *The Struggle for Eternal Life*, with introduction by R. W. Dale. Numerous articles by Dr. Petavel advocating the same doctrine or in reply to objections were published in reviews and magazines at Paris, Montauban, Lausanne, &c., in succeeding years.

In 1878 Dr. Petavel delivered a course of ten lectures on Conditional Immortality at the University of Geneva, and these were largely attended, not only by students, but also by pastors and many ladies. In 1886 he again lectured at the University on the same subject, the course this time including twelve lessons. These were repeated at the Academy of Neuchâtel in the following year, and they formed the basis of the important book which was published in two volumes in 1891 and 1892, entitled *Le Problème de l'Immortalité*.<sup>1</sup> This book was translated into English and issued in 1892 with the title, *The Problem of Immortality*.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile Mr. Byse's translation of Mr. White's book,

<sup>1</sup> Paris : Fischbacher, Rue de Seine, 33.

<sup>2</sup> London : Elliot Stock, 62, Paternoster Row.

entitled *L'Immortalité Conditionnelle ou la Vie en Christ*,<sup>1</sup> had been published in Paris, and had greatly contributed to the success of Dr. Petavel's later lectures. Its appearance caused considerable sensation among French-speaking theologians, and it became the subject of much discussion among them. Previously to its publication Mr. Byse had been the editor of a weekly newspaper in Paris, *Le Journal du Protestantisme Français*, wherein he had introduced the subject to his readers, and so to some extent prepared their minds for consideration of the forthcoming book. But soon after its publication, early in 1880, he accepted a call to become Pastor of the Free Protestant Church meeting in the Rue Belliard in Brussels, then connected with the so-called "Belgian Christian Missionary Church." To this post he was appointed after having explained that he could not agree to the clause in the official creed of the Belgian association of Churches which maintained an eternity of suffering for the wicked, and received assurances that his explanations were satisfactory, both from the Consistory of the Brussels Church and from the official representative of the associated Churches. Nevertheless the publication of his translation of Mr. White's book and some expressions used in his own preface to the volume at once gave rise to strong objections on the part of several neighbouring pastors; and when, two years later, he preached a series of sermons on the subject, he was taken to task very severely by these objectors, who proved to be all-powerful in the official Synod, although in the Congregation at Brussels there were very few objectors. The result of the proceedings in the Synod was that the Congregation decided to sustain the Pastor and to withdraw from the "Belgian Christian Missionary Church," thus resuming its original independence.

The Belgian law does not recognize trusts in relation to property, and the synodal party took advantage of this fact and induced the nominal proprietor of the chapel in the Rue Belliard to cause the ejection from it of Mr. Byse and the Church to which the building morally though not legally belonged. After struggling bravely against numerous difficulties for several years, Mr. Byse found himself obliged to leave. He went to Lausanne, where he has resided ever since.

<sup>1</sup> Paris : Fischbacher, Rue de Seine, 33.



While still living at Brussels, however, he had been nominated by the annual gathering of pastors of the French Protestant Churches to bring up a report on "Conditional Immortality" to be presented the following year. This was done; the French pastors were more open-minded than those in Belgium, and so, at the "General Pastoral Conference" of April, 1885, in Paris, Mr. Byse's report was "very much applauded and admired," as testified by one who was present. It was afterwards printed as a pamphlet entitled *Notre Durée*.

At Lausanne, in 1886, Mr. Byse delivered a series of six lectures on Conditional Immortality on consecutive Sunday afternoons, and arranged for a public discussion on the next following Sunday. This was a great success, having been presided over by the venerable philosopher, Professor Charles Secrétan. Since that time Mr. Byse has taught the same doctrine in many sermons and lectures, having been the first and for a long time almost the only one in French-speaking countries to preach openly that man is a candidate for immortality, and can only through union with Christ attain eternal life. Among other publications on the subject, Mr. Byse wrote in 1892 for the *Revue Chrétienne* (of Paris) a masterly reply to a plea in favour of universal salvation which had appeared in a previous issue of that review. Of all these facts Mr. White was kept informed, and his influence was a potent factor throughout.

And what, it may be asked, has been the result of all this activity? The answer is that, at the present time, the representatives of the Augustinian doctrine are reduced to silence if they have not all been converted, while some of the leading advocates of the doctrine of universal salvation have been convinced of the need for a penal sanction and now uphold in its main lines the doctrine of Mr. White. Several of the professors of dogmatic theology in the French and Swiss Universities and Academies are Conditionalists, as was the late Professor Auguste Sabatier, of Paris. The leading philosophers of France and Switzerland, Mr. Charles Renouvier, his distinguished friend, Mr. Pilon, and the late Professor Charles Secrétan, have given their adhesion. In Geneva, several leading pastors and the most successful evangelists are pronounced adherents, so that the

teaching is no longer confined to the theologians, but is openly preached among a population which has been largely alienated from Christianity on account of its perversions; and this preaching is attended by crowds Sunday after Sunday, in the large Victoria Hall. Similar results have been attained in other parts of Switzerland and France.

As illustrating the effect of the doctrine on certain individuals may be mentioned a statement made to Dr. Petavel in 1880 by a well-known jurist of the Canton de Vaud, he being also a poet, some of whose verses had then recently won for him a gold medal in France. He said that, having been prepared by passing through great trials, on obtaining Mr. White's book he read it through with avidity within thirty-six hours, and it had been to him like the fish's gall to Tobit, having opened his eyes to the truth of Christianity.

Turning now to Germany, it cannot be said that Mr. White's influence has been felt there in so great a degree. But the main theme of Mr. White's book has been long held and taught by some of the principal German theologians, a number of whose declarations are quoted in Mr. Byse's preface to his translation of *Life in Christ*. Dr. Dorner quotes that book more than once in Vol. IV. of his *System of Christian Doctrine*, but without giving full adhesion to the views thus quoted, although he says: "This hypothesis seems exceedingly favourable to the unity and harmonious consummation of the world;" and in writing to Mr. Byse he characterized Mr. White's book as "thoroughly scientific."

While the idea that personal immortality is and must be conditioned by individual character and will is widely prevalent among German theologians, it does not seem to be at all generally preached or made popular, as it has been to so large an extent in English and French speaking countries. But in March 1884 Dr. Petavel was able to write to Mr. White: "I find by a work of Mücke that neither Universalism nor the traditional dogma have been supported of late by first-rate divines in Germany. Nitzsch was, Dorner is, very near to us; while the great Rothe was entirely, and the powerful Ritschl is virtually, with us."

In Holland, a series of articles on the subject was published in 1883 and 1884 by Dr. Jonker, of Rotterdam, in the *Theologische Studiën*, a review issued at Utrecht. In a letter to Dr. Petavel the writer stated that his first impulse to study the question was given by the perusal of *La Fin du Mal*. He also said that the subject had not previously been discussed publicly in that country, and that these articles had roused a good deal of interest, adding that many pastors and young theologians were favourably disposed. In the first of his articles he had quoted Dr. v. Oosterzee as calling *Life in Christ* a highly important (*hoogstbelangrijk*) book.

Mr. White's book became known in Denmark, and one lady of Copenhagen, Countess Bernstorff, was so deeply impressed with its importance that she not only translated it into Danish, but had it published at her expense.

In Italy too, Mr. White's work penetrated quickly to the Waldensian valleys, where a book of 300 pages was published in 1883 by Oscar Cocorda, under the title. *L'Immortalità Condizionata ed il Materialismo*. The main purpose of this book was to defend Mr. White and the doctrine of *Life in Christ* from the charge of materialism, which had been freely but erroneously brought against them on the Continent.

In the United States of America Mr. White's writings are well known, and have had considerable effect. Two of the most renowned preachers, now deceased, Joseph Cook, of Boston, and D. L. Moody, came into personal contact with Mr. White when in England, and were undoubtedly influenced thereby in favour of his views of the last things. In 1889, Rev. Ch. H. Oliphant, of Methuen, Mass., published at Boston a translation of some of Dr. Petavel's essays under the title *The Extinction of Evil*. In anticipation of this publication, Mr. White was appealed to for a preface, and being already acquainted with the French originals, he wrote one recommending the book. His work, *Life in Christ*, is quoted by Dr. W. R. Huntington and Rev. J. H. Pettingell in their writings in favour of the same theme.

A large number of the younger ministers of both episcopal and non-episcopal Churches in the United States hold the doctrine and teach it, each in his own way. One of the leading preachers in New York, Dr. Parkhurst, of Madison Square Presbyterian Church, recently in a sermon spoke thus: "If—and there is nothing to disprove it—it is the intention of Nature that a soul should reach that spiritual longevity expressed by the word 'eternal,' the soul will have to pay for the superb prerogative by fulfilling the conditions and taking good care of its spiritual health."

In 1893 Mr. Oliphant reported to Dr. Petavel the adhesion of two recognized leaders in the Congregational Churches; also that at Andover seminary Conditionalism is allowed a place of honour and of orthodoxy, adding: "The battle is now won so far that no Conditionalist is henceforth to be branded on this side of the water."

Two years earlier than that an American clerical correspondent, certain to be well informed, wrote to Mr. White: "For the pleasure and for the very great profit which I have derived from all your published writings, I owe you a debt of gratitude which I can never repay, but which it delights me to acknowledge. Since reading your first and larger book, *Life in Christ*, I have recommended it personally to a large number of the clergy of the diocese of Virginia. I found it already quite well known to several of them, and in every case it was acknowledged to be the master work on the subject. There is no sort of question that it has done and will continue to do a vast deal towards bringing the Church here to a knowledge of the truth on this most important matter. My own observation convinces me that the doctrine of Life in Christ has made long strides forward in the Church in this country. . . . I should say that it is not only for the light which you have cast on the central subject of your writings that I am indebted to you. There are many other truths which I had overlooked, or of which I was more or less ignorant, which you have illuminated for me. . . . Almost every page of your writings has been to me a source of inspiration. . . ."



In India Mr. White's teaching has proved influential in more ways than one. Two of these may here be mentioned.

An ant-eaten, fly-blown page of a tract, written by Mr. White while at Hereford, and containing a statement of the doctrine of Life in Christ, was left by some passing traveller on the window-sill of a rest-house in India more than fifty years ago. One day this is found there by the chief jailer of Bangalore while on a journey ; he reads it, searches the Scriptures, believes it, forms a lending library of the books and pamphlets which set forth the argument. A young Wesleyan missionary, forced by the overpowering burden of Conference theology to think over his creed among the Indian millions, is led similarly to this conclusion, and before he returns home by command, to resign his office, he discovers that through the circulation of books from the pious jailer's library, there was not a European Christian in a populous cantonment near Bangalore, who had not embraced the belief of Life in Christ.

Again, in Mr. White's own words : "Rev. W. A. Hobbs, a Baptist missionary from Sewry, in Bengal, in 1870, at home on furlough after ten years' labour, in passing up Fleet Street, sees an advertisement of 'Three Letters on *Life in Christ*,' then appearing in the *Christian World*. Mr. Hobbs buys a copy, reads, goes home, and goes back to India, to study the matter for several years, is deeply convinced, avows his conviction to the Baptist Missionary Committee. On returning home, invalided, a second time, in 1878, he gradually and quietly drops out of missionary employment, and is consigned to an obscure post as a home worker ; thence he is drawn out again by a wonderful providence to an independent mission-work in Calcutta ; commences evangelical labour in open confession of the doctrine of Life through the Incarnation ; conciliates all Christian hearts by his temper and prudence ; is supplied with the means of maintaining native fellow-workers, all of them earnest believers in the same doctrine ; circulates Christian literature ; writes catechisms and tracts on a Scriptural basis—all his brethren encouraging him—just because the hand of God is evidently with this honest and devoted man."

What Mr. White did not say must here be added, that this

independent mission-work was arranged and provided for by himself and Mr. Samuel Smith, M.P., who were both deeply interested in the reports sent to them by Mr. Hobbs from time to time.

With Mr. White's concurrence and co-operation, Mr. Hobbs prepared several pamphlets setting forth the nature and claims of Christianity in forms specially adapted to the Hindoos. One of these, a series of questions and answers, was published in both Bengali and English. With reference to this tract Mr. Hobbs reported thus :—

“The Bengali translation of *Aids to Light and Life* has created no small stir in native society, more particularly amongst the native Christian community. It has been most gratefully received by native Christians belonging to all denominations, as well as by the heathen. At least fifty persons have warmly thanked me for writing it, some of them assuring me that the reading of it has removed from their minds difficulties and doubts which have pressed upon them for years. One heathen man (Mone Mahon Ghose), who had been inquiring into Christianity for several years, but could not receive it on account of the supposed unreasonableness of the doctrines of atonement, judgment proceedings, and everlasting torments, had his difficulties so largely removed by reading the tract, that he applied to me for baptism, and is now a member of the Episcopal Church at Kidderpore, which Church I advised him to join, being the nearest to his residence. The English edition will probably create as much interest amongst the English-speaking natives, as the Bengali edition has amongst those who know only their mother tongue. To God and His truth be all the glory.”

Writing of some of the better educated natives, in fact native gentlemen, Mr. Hobbs says :—

“The extent to which some of these men, who have got their education at missionary colleges, are acquainted with the letter of our Christian Scriptures is very surprising ; whilst the inferences they draw from Scripture statements are amazingly acute, though too frequently unwarranted or unfair. It is among such persons that I hope my tract, *Christianity God's Revelation to Men* will prove to be useful. As a rule they have a high

regard for Christ's moral character, and accept a large portion of His teaching ; but they wriggle about dolefully in their efforts to get rid of all teaching which sets forth our Saviour as a suffering and atoning God. In fact, there is but little difference between them and Unitarians, except that most of them cling to the notion that man's spirit is not an independent spirit, but a fractional portion of the divine essence, to be eventually re-absorbed into God. *To a man*, so far as my observation has extended, they refuse to believe in the dogma of unending suffering ; which of course gives me, with my Life in Christ views, and other corollary ideas, an immense advantage in discussion with them, which the majority of my missionary brethren do not enjoy. In fact, when they launch out, as frequently they do, against the truth of Christianity, on account of what they call 'its unreasonable severity being antagonistic to man's conscious or intuitive ideas of God's character,' it is almost amusing to note how vacant they look, how they flounder about in argument, when I tell them that I and many more do not believe in eternal torment ; the simple fact of the matter being that the whole subject hinges upon what is the right rule of interpreting words, some taking the words bearing on future punishment in a literal, other in a figurative or spiritual sense. I then lay before them half a dozen texts from the Bible, and ask them to tell me what they think the words mean. In nineteen cases out of twenty they declare that, though my view is a new view to them, nevertheless it is that which they themselves would naturally adopt if they were for the first time reading the words."

By the personal use of literature of the right sort, and by conversation with all whom he could reach, Mr. Hobbs exerted considerable influence in Calcutta, also by public preaching in Bengali in the streets of the city and in villages visited in company with other missionaries. When about to leave on his homeward voyage he wrote : "For the last four and a half years I have not at all laid out my efforts with a view to secure public baptism, but to impress hearts with a sense of sin and to secure a simple trust in the Anointed Lord Jesus, and I have had my reward."

The friendship thus formed between Mr. Hobbs and Mr. White lasted as long as they both lived.

Referring to a remarkable series of articles in favour of Conditional Immortality in the *Statesman and Friend of India*, in Calcutta, at the end of 1893 and the beginning of 1894, originated by the Rev. H. G. E. de St. Dalmas, Mr. White wrote: "A publication rendered more easy by the labours of a score of witnesses in India, with many of whom I have been in correspondence in years gone by. Hobbs was only one of the series, but the work he did prepared the way for the present triumphal march of St. Dalmas."

China, too, came under the influence of Mr. White, chiefly through the medium of Rev. Evan Bryant, of the London Missionary Society, long resident at Hankow. When on furlough in England Mr. Bryant several times gave interesting testimony at Hawley Road Chapel. Mr. White wrote in 1882:—

"Mr. Bryant has openly taught for ten years what he believes to be the revelation of God on Life Eternal, and his words will not fall to the ground. For such is the nature of this truth that sometimes one single hint or sentence of direction sets whole companies of people reading their Bibles in a fresh light, and when that process begins, especially accompanied by earnest prayers, it is seldom long before some of the readers see as in plain daylight that the Bible was not written to teach man's natural immortality or the everlasting torments of lost souls. In truth, future punishment does not occupy in the Bible nearly the prominent position that it occupies in mediæval and modern theology."

Ten years later a vindication of the doctrine of Conditional Immortality was published in the *Messenger*, of Shanghai.

As narrated in Chapter XI., Mr. Impey carried to South Africa a vivid recollection of the sympathy of Mr. White and his congregation, as well as a firm conviction of the truth of the doctrine on Life in Christ, for the teaching of which in South Africa he had been called to suffer.

Thus it appears that in all four quarters of the globe Mr. White's influence has been operative, as it still is, more or less directly, helping to save men from scepticism and leading them to firm faith in the justice and mercy of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.



## APPENDIX D

### DR. DALE'S ADDRESS AT HAWLEY ROAD

*See page 136.*

THIS celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the commencement of my friend's ministry in this place would be incomplete if there were no recognition of the service which he has rendered to the theological faith of this country by the courage, the earnestness, and the singular ability with which he has maintained and illustrated the doctrine that the highest life of man—his true life—the life which alone is properly endless—is that which man receives from Christ. In these days it requires no great intellectual freedom, and no exceptional robustness of moral nature to challenge the truth of any of the traditions of the Church. The traditions are fast melting away. The old fences within which it was once required that theological thought should travel appear to be rapidly decaying, even where they are strengthened by formal confessions of faith. Among the Churches that rely for the perpetuation of a true knowledge of God upon the permanent presence of the Spirit of God, rather than on the restraints of formal creeds, there is very little to prevent any man of moderate vigour of character and average force of intellect from venturing on new and unfamiliar paths. It was not so when Mr. White began his ministry and published his treatise on *Life in Christ* in its earlier form. What boldness of intellectual temper it required, what loyalty to conscience, what faith in God, to enable him frankly to profess the characteristic doctrine of that book, it is not easy for those of you who are under thirty to imagine. Nor is it easy for you to imagine what he must have suffered from the isolation into which

he was driven by the distrust of men in whom he recognized a love for Christ as real and deep as his own.

The inevitable condition of all antagonisms to popular convictions on grave questions he was, no doubt, prepared to accept. When we strike hard at the faith of other men, it is absurd to complain because they return the blow. It is unmanly weakness to resent the vehemence and energy with which the opinions which we challenge are defended, and to think ourselves hardly used if we cannot retain the rewards which come to the men who maintain popular opinion, and at the same time win the glory which belongs to the leaders of reformation. . . . The temper of the time might have shaken the steadfastness and fidelity of a nature less vigorous than that of our friend. For myself I give God thanks for the indomitable spirit with which, from first to last, he has maintained the truth with which he believes he has been entrusted. His fidelity has helped to make it easier to all of us to be faithful to conscience and hope. It is well that we should remember to-night that this truth is much wider and more comprehensive than is usually imagined. It is not simply a theory on the future destiny of the impenitent. It is a re-statement of the relation of the human race to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a re-assertion in a more definite and emphatic form of the ancient doctrine of the Church concerning the nature and necessity of regeneration. It has a claim to consideration on the ground that it is rooted in the common faith of Christendom concerning the wonderful character of that change which passes upon men when they receive the life of God. If we think of the new birth as being simply a great change in our habits and tastes, the question arises, How great must the change be which renders it possible for a man to enter the kingdom of heaven?—a question which has harassed many devout and earnest souls, impaired their religious vigour, and restrained the freedom of their joy in God. But if in the new birth there is the beginning of a new Life, the question assumes altogether a different form. We have to inquire whether there is adequate evidence that the life of God has come to us. We are met with the objection that there is no such infinite contrast between those who believe in Christ and those who refuse to believe in Him, as ought to be

apparent, if a divine life has been conferred on the one class which has not been conferred on the other. It is alleged that the history of Christendom is fatal to our doctrine—the facts are altogether against us. But in my own name, and in the name of all those who have received the truth for which Mr. White has contended, I decline to assume any special responsibility in relation to this objection. The responsibility of meeting it does not specially belong to us. We share it with all—no matter how vehemently they repudiate sympathy with our special position—who accept the central truths of the Christian revelation.

Precisely the same objection might have been urged, with precisely the same force, against St. Paul, when he maintained that if any man is in Christ he is a new creature, old things have passed away, behold all things have become new; when he taught that Christian men are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Precisely the same objection might have been urged, with precisely the same force, against St. John when he affirmed that there are some men who are "of God" and other men who are not "of God," and when he said, "*We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us.*" St. John, too, declared that "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son," and added, "He that hath the Son hath the life, and he that hath not the Son hath not the life;" and he said again, "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren; he that loveth not his brethren abideth in death."

Precisely the same objection might have been urged with precisely the same force against a greater than St. Paul or St. John. There were some to whom He said, "Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life," or that the life was not theirs. He said that except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Admission to the divine kingdom and exclusion from it carries with it as great a contrast between man and man as any that can be imputed to our teaching. He exhorted His disciples to abide in Him that His life might be theirs, and that they might bring forth fruit, and He warned them that if they refused to abide in Him they would be cut off as a branch and wither. Here, again, the difference between the living branch on

the living vine and the dead branch separated from the vine is as vast as that which exists between men on the theory maintained by ourselves. Nor is it pertinent at this point to urge that in the endless years beyond death, all those who have rejected the life in this world may receive it, for the objection affirms that between those who are alleged to have received the life of God already and those who have not there is no such apparent difference as is required in order to verify the hypothesis ; and we maintain, in reply, that the New Testament, from first to last, asserts a difference as great as our position implies between those that are in Christ and those that are not. It is not against us and our position that this objection should be brought, but against the widest assumptions and the fundamental truths of the Christian faith. The objection is not unfamiliar to us. If there were time to discuss it this evening, it might be met and destroyed. The tares and the wheat may be so alike for a time, that, in our eyes, the field in which they are growing together may seem to bear only one crop. But the inner life of the wheat which will reveal itself in the golden ear by and by is of another nature than the life of the tares. God sees the difference ; and I venture to say that the difference is revealed in a strong, emphatic form in the whole history of the conflict of the kingdom of God with the powers of evil.

“He that hath the Son hath the life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life ;” this is our fundamental principle. It is a principle which, I suppose, we hold in common with all Christians. To defend it is not our special concern, though we think that our whole conception of truth makes the principle more intensely real and vivid to the thoughts of men. When we are asked what is the condition of those to whom the highest life has not yet come, wide differences of opinion may at once emerge. I cannot speak for others, but only for myself. To me it seems certain that whatever may be the history of the origin of our race, man, every man, is invested with prerogatives and powers which raise him to an immeasurable height above the inferior orders of creation. . . . Man, every man, has moral freedom. He has more than this. He has a nature which can never reach its perfection except in God ; he is agitated by yearnings for an



infinite satisfaction ; he is moved by impulses which, however constantly they may be baffled, reveal to himself and to others that the true current of his life sets towards the divine. . . . The tree of life was no graceful ornament of the paradise of God ; it was there because man needed it ; it is the immortal symbol of the truth that there are wants in human nature which only a divine life can satisfy, possibilities which only a divine life can fulfil. A beast ! No ! Man is infinitely more than that. It is not a beast that struggles vainly against destiny in the ancient tragedy. It is not a beast that in modern times resents with infinite sorrow and fierce revolt the pain and disorder which have come upon all creation. It is not a beast that has sought for gods to worship in the stars of heaven, and in the meanest and most majestic objects on earth—in the clouds, and in the winds, and in the heroic founders of national communities. It is not to a beast that the moral law appeals. It is not to a beast that the life of God can be given. It is not a beast that has the power to refuse it. The power to refuse it—this, the affirmation that the power is essential to human nature—is the special heresy for which we are responsible.

I ask those who in the interest of universal restoration reject our doctrine as utterly incredible, to remember that so far as the controversy between them and us lies in the province of speculation, it resolves itself into two questions—perhaps into one. The first—and in this the difference between us is probably a difference in terms rather than in substance—Is there a life possible to man which he does not possess until in the New Testament sense of the phrase he is “in Christ” ? The second—Is it possible for man to refuse this life and to stand by his refusal ? The difference between us does not touch our conception of the love of God. They do not, they cannot think that to us the divine pity is less tender than to them, or the divine long-suffering less patient, or the divine mercy less free. We, too, believe that for us sinners and our salvation the Son of God laid aside His glory and endured the shame and sorrow and anguish of the cross : that He came because God loved the world—the whole world, and earnestly longs to bring the whole world to Himself. Has not God shown mercy to us, as well as to them ; and after the

mercy He has shown to us can we in our thoughts set any limits on His mercy to mankind? No; if there are any who say that the God whom we preach is less loving than theirs, they say it inconsiderately, and because they have not fully mastered the true issues of the controversy. It is our conviction that God, with all the resources of His infinite nature, is on the side of righteousness; and that He has an infinite hatred of sin; but that to man belongs the tremendous prerogative of confronting the awful and august will, and refusing to be righteous. All the tragedy of man's life comes from man's possession of this perilous faculty. It is God's will that all men should be righteous now, not merely in some future and remote age as the result of chastisement, and love, and discipline; God's will is resisted and defied. When God made us He assumed the responsibility of conferring upon us the power which is revealed in our revolt. It is our conviction that this moral freedom, which renders possible all the moral glory of the race as well as all its sin, is inalienable, indestructible; and that for ever—if man is to exist for ever—man will retain the power of resisting the authority and love of God. Those who meet us on the ground of speculation must meet us here. Their assault must be on our assertion and defence of the moral freedom of man. They must strip man of the awful distinction which to us is characteristic of his nature, before they can demonstrate that all men must necessarily be restored to God. Our philosophical controversy with Universal Restoration is a controversy with the philosophical principles of the old Calvinistic theology—principles which, in our day, are most strongly asserted by the great teachers of materialism.

But a final conclusion is not to be reached by speculation. When the moral freedom of the race is conceded, it may still be maintained that for ever and for ever, until the last soul in revolt yields to the infinite grace of God, the divine endeavours to rescue us from sin will be sustained; and that even if through eternity the revolt is maintained, God fainteth not, neither is He weary; and through eternity He will continue to strive with the sin and distrust of His moral creatures. With our limited acquaintance with the possibilities of our own nature, and with our absolute ignorance of the new moral conditions of the life on the other

side of death, such a theory would have had everything to recommend it in the absence of any distinct and authoritative revelation. While we are as sure of our moral freedom as of our own existence, and while we are sure that if our moral freedom were crushed, or irresistibly overturned, we should cease to be men, we must acknowledge that of the life to come we know almost nothing. But even in the absence of any distinct revelation concerning the future of those who in this world have hardened themselves against the power and love of God, we might have feared that possibly their fate would be hopeless ; we might have feared it, I say, though it would have been the audacity of presumption to have affirmed it. We might have feared it because of what we have reason to hope will be the future condition of those who have received Christ. For them we trust that moral freedom will be consistent with absolute security from the possibility of sin. They will be inaccessible to temptation. The eternal law of righteousness, which is eternally one with the regal will of God, the Ruler of all, will also be for ever one with the loyal will of the redeemed—the subjects of His authority and the children of His love. Law and freedom will be reconciled in us as in Him, with perfect and immortal unity. Whether any corresponding catastrophe might come upon those who have resisted Christ, we should have been unable—apart from Revelation—to tell. We might have regarded it as a fearful possibility. An irrevocable divorce between the will and the law of righteousness—a divorce consummated by man's own persistent disobedience—might have seemed almost as likely as an immortal and inevitable union. As the very nature of the redeemed will become light and holiness—freedom remaining—so we might have feared that, freedom remaining, the very nature of the impenitent might become darkness and sin. This fear seems to us confirmed by the unambiguous teaching of Christ and the apostles. . . .

I have no authority to state on behalf of others the precise definition of that doctrine of which Mr. Edward White is the principal representative. In his presence I am conscious that there is a certain presumption in any attempt to state it ; but as I have been for many years so absorbed in other forms of work as to be unable either to speak or to write much on this controversy

I thought my friend would forgive me if I ventured to say, in connection with this service, what I have said to-night. To what extent the doctrine, or the group of doctrines, for which Mr. Edward White has contended has won the acceptance of Christian people I cannot tell. As I have said elsewhere, I believe that for the moment the main current of opinion among us is running strongly in favour of universal restoration; but that doctrine seems to me to be so destitute of all solid foundation that it is impossible for it to remain as a permanent article in the faith of the Church. It is the expression of the young and ardent and generous hope of a generation that has only half disentangled itself from the philosophical theory involved in the doctrine of eternal torment. It is a form of theological speculation which corresponds to some of the earlier astronomical theories—theories which were constructed out of the intellectual resources of those by whom they were created instead of following the great facts of the universe. I believe that within a few years the main body of opinion in the Free Churches, at least of this country, will be in favour of that suspense of judgement which very many recommend, and I cannot but believe that, after that, the main body of opinion in our Churches will be found substantially on the side of the doctrine with the history of which this Church and its pastor are so honourably connected.

I may take the opportunity to-night of saying that for a considerable number of years I have held, and I have preached, what I believe to be the truth concerning life in Christ—eternal life in Christ only. I have read very little indeed on this controversy. I studied as carefully as I knew how the contents of the New Testament patiently and earnestly for many months, and for more than many months, and at last reached the position with which I had become familiar through my friendship for your pastor. I wish now to declare that, having reached these conclusions, I am not conscious that they have at all impaired the authority in my teaching of any of the great central doctrines of the Christian faith. The doctrine of the Trinity remains untouched; and the doctrine of the incarnation, and the doctrine of the atonement in its evangelical sense, and the doctrine of justification by faith, and the doctrine of judgement by works, and the doctrine of regenera-



tion have received, I believe, from these conclusions a new and intenser illustration. The condition of the progress and triumph of any great truth is that it should be kept incorporate with the whole substance of the Christian faith, and inspired with its life. No truth has life enough in itself to win its own victory alone. There is great peril always menacing those who believe that it has fallen to their task to correct any religious error. They are likely so to emphasize the truth which it is their function to illustrate and to maintain, as to deprive it of the strength it ought to receive from its alliance with the whole circle of truths and facts revealed in Holy Scripture. I believe that my friend has escaped that peril. To the public outside, his name, naturally enough, is best known in connection with this special doctrine, just as my name—if I may be forgiven a personal allusion—is best known to large masses of the public in connection with certain theories about the relation between the Church and the State. Only the other day a lady, a member of the Church of England, who has been worshipping in my congregation for a twelvemonth, said to me, "When I came I was told that every Sunday morning and every Sunday night I should hear a sermon against the Church." I do not know whether she meant to complain, but she said that she had hardly heard anything at all about it. Now my friend has doubtless dealt with this great doctrine with which his name is specially connected, and dealt with it in this pulpit; but I know him too well to suppose that he has limited the religious thought of this congregation to the special truth which it is his function to defend.

To all who may share his beliefs and mine, I commend his example. Let us preach the whole Gospel, giving this truth its proper place; but only its proper place. Let it be remembered, too, that all great doctrinal victories have been won in connection with great spiritual victories. The struggle of the Reformation was a doctrinal struggle; but it was also a great religious revival, and the Reformation would never have won its victories had not the religious life of the northern nations of Europe received a new impulse and a new inspiration. Those, surely, can have no function to declare new truth, or truth hitherto forgotten and neglected, who are unable to use with force and with effect the

great truths which are the common inheritance of the Christian Church. And if those of us who are specially entrusted, as we believe, with the defence and illustration of this doctrine do not secure the great spiritual results which the Gospel was intended to achieve, our teaching will be condemned by the inefficiency of our own ministry. I thank God that the ministry in this place of my dear friend, whom I have known long and loved right well, has been crowned with much success; and I trust that both to him and to you the review of the twenty-five years now left behind you will enkindle fresh zeal and strengthen faith both in the power and in the love of God, and that the years that are coming may witness a richer and a nobler harvest than even the years which have gone by.

## APPENDIX E

### GLEANINGS FROM LATEST NOTE-BOOKS

DURING the last few months of his life, Mr. White, while entirely debarred from public work, was not at all inactive mentally, except when too ill even to read or write, as was the case through the greater part of January and again in March and April and part of May 1898. It was at this period that he wrote: "Life becomes wearisome when no work is in hand. Prayer for work is essential. 'Thy will be *done*' on earth, not merely read, or thought, or preached about. When thought finds no outcome in work, it is mere dreaming. 'Give us this day our daily *work*' is a prayer as much needed as that for our daily bread." And since the only work that he could do was to record his thinking over the Scriptures, that he did, and has accordingly left a large number of notes relating partly to the controversies in which he had been engaged, but chiefly to the Scriptures themselves. The following are selected in the hope that they may help to give effect to the last efforts and studies of the Christian minister and theologian who has passed away from this earthly scene.

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The progress of any recovered truth towards general acceptance in Christian Churches depends greatly (1) on the clearness and validity of the arguments by which it is maintained, and (2) on the spirit in which it is set forth. The least sign of a desire to found a sect or party based on the recovered verity, or to make a name by its advocacy, is generally fatal to success. He that loses his life for Christ's sake is the man that finds it. And he who is willing to be crucified with Christ and counted as "the offscouring of all things," is the man who is made to triumph

in Christ after a season of rejection. A resurrection of rejected truths is always going on in the world, just in proportion as they have "suffered awhile," with their witnesses, in the beginning.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Old and New Testament Scriptures, considered as the production of Asiatics, form one prolonged miracle of tone and style. The Brahminical books, the Chinese classics, and the Koran, are three specimens of the natural style of Asia—mystical, bombastic, and malevolent. But the Hebrew Scriptures give us history or biography, all in quiet perfection, all through, poetry so true in tone, so lofty in spirit, and so sublime that the book of Psalms has been adopted as the Psalter of all civilized nations, and so spiritual that no other collection of verses in the world can be placed even in the humblest comparison with this. Men of all nations live and die with the words of the Hebrew Psalmists on their lips, and feel that no worthier guide to worship could be found in heaven. The Bible, on this side the veil, is the best proof we can have that there is another side, where the realities abide. The successive parts of the Bible form the connected portions of a vast telescope by which we learn to see things otherwise invisible. Genesis is the eyepiece. Revelation is the great lens by which we see beyond the heavens.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Four Evangelists. In the mouth of four such witnesses "every word is established." For the hypothesis of invention is impossible as an explanation of any one of the Gospels, but four times impossible in relation to the four. How could four Galileans have achieved such a triumph in biography, if inventors, as to write each a Gospel which confirms the testimony of the other three as to Christ's essential qualities, while each individualizing in the quality of his memoir? The four together resemble the four sides and faces of the Great Pyramid, containing centrally the tomb of the risen King, the empty tomb :

"A form had pressed it  
And was there no more,"

and surrounded by steps on each side which lead to a view of the midnight heavens into which the risen King has ascended, there "to prepare a place for" us in the life everlasting.



It takes a lifetime of study to appreciate rightly the merits of the four Gospels. These are: the presentation of one life, each biography adding something to the general result, and this the life-portrait of a Person the like of whom had never appeared before among either Jews or Gentiles, a Teacher all compassionate, armed with miraculous power, all holy, the terror of hypocrites and formalists, the Saviour of the sinner and the sorrowful. "Jesus, He shall save His people from their sins," make an end of sins, by blood and by renewal of the spirit of life. How wholly unlike all the great men of other nations, Egypt, Greece, China, Rome! More holy and severe for rebels, more compassionate for penitents. Socrates and Plato had argument and wit, but no compassion or attraction for "sinners." Fancy the scene of the sinful woman in the story of Socrates!

\* \* \* \* \*

"Never man spake like this man":—

1. In the name of God so as to realize His presence and justice and mercy.
2. To the conscience of wicked men, like the Pharisees.
3. To the souls of sinners repenting, bringing them to His feet weeping. His words still in all languages flying through the world and bringing sinners to God in repentance and a new life.
4. Commending Himself to each man's conscience as the Son of God, in proportion as each soul is honest and accessible to the voice of God and the oracle of mercy.

\* \* \* \* \*

We look at the New Testament with eyes accustomed to the media through which it is now seen, the traditionary thought of eighteen centuries. But if we come to look at it directly (and not intermediately) one can as soon think the Alps to have been reared by human agency as the Christian religion to have been invented by Jewish provincial fishermen assisted by one provincial Rabbi from Asia Minor. James, Peter, and John + Paul are very inadequate inventors of the Christ, or of New Testament religion. For if Christ was not a reality, living, teaching, acting, suffering, as the Gospels describe, then He was invented. But by whom? By an individual or by a company? Who could have invented Him? Pharisees? Sadducees? or who? If He was

invented, His creator has died out of knowledge. If the Jesus of the four Gospels was a reality, then whence came He? "Thou art the Son of the living God" is the only rational answer. A real and divine Jesus alone can account for the Gospel narratives, or for the consequences which have followed them. So that we behold, as in these glasses, the Glory of the Lord.

\* \* \* \* \*

The four Gospels are four visions of the transfiguration of humanity in Christ.

\* \* \* \* \*

Nothing is more contrary to the spirit of Christianity than the Hermitism of depraved Christianity. To be alone would be to wither away, even in Paradise; but to abandon the "body of Christ," in which dwells the spirit of life, is to seek the second death.

\* \* \* \* \*

If the immortality of the sinful soul, its natural and destined everlasting life, had been the metaphysical foundation of the Gospel, it could not but have appeared everywhere in the Old Testament and in the New. But nothing is more striking than its absence everywhere from both Old and New Testaments. But when the old saints looked for "a city that hath foundations," they rested, not on their own nature, but on the life-giving promise of God. The inheritance was not of the Law. "The soul that sinneth shall die." And death by the Law is never once in the Old Testament used or explained in the sense of everlasting life in misery. The beasts "perish," and "man that is in honour and understandeth not is like the beasts that perish."

\* \* \* \* \*

The division of the sacred Scriptures into chapters and verses, although itself a partially irrational process as to the historical books, has proved practically a revelation in detail of their infinite worth, the immense majority of its comminated fragments having served to reveal more fully the solid value of its material, and to prove that the effect of its chapters does not depend upon their general or rhetorical value, but on the weft and golden woof of its whole texture.

\* \* \* \* \*

The nearness to God which we may expect beyond the veil depends on our nearness to Him here. If "far from Him by wicked works" here, who can expect the beatific vision? "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you."

\* \* \* \* \*

The common people, and all young people, judge pretty much of Christianity by what it has done for their elders, in middle life and old age; whether it has given them an active benevolence, a new spring of life, in thought and genuine feeling, a life with a forward look to some better land beyond where "all the air is love;" or whether it has hardened still more all that was hard before, and left them clinging tighter than ever to the so-called "trifles" of this momentary world and its selfish interests.

\* \* \* \* \*

The lives of good men in the Bible are helpful on both sides, by their excellences and by their defects. If the Bible had recorded only their good qualities, their influence would have been diminished one half. But Abraham's equivocation, Moses' violent temper, David's murder and adultery, Peter's falsehoods and denials, as being the sins of good men assuredly in heaven, have encouraged innumerable saints, who have sinned in special instances, to hold fast to the "anchor of the soul" that entereth within the veil, and so to recover themselves "out of the snare of the devil" when overtaken in a fault.

\* \* \* \* \*

There is no surer indication of a soul uninfluenced by truth already known than a dislike of hearing it repeated. "Oh, you have said that before!" Yes, and if you had really received it before, you would enjoy hearing it again. A dry, dead, mummy of a soul, if it could speak, would cry out when listening to the 136th Psalm in the Temple service: "For His mercy endureth for ever": "Oh, you have said that before; let it cease!" As well try to put an end to the morning salutation and "Good-night"—said before!

\* \* \* \* \*

Heads and divisions of a sermon are like the woodwork of a window-frame, distributing and fixing the attention. These divisions should be like one or two large panes, and not like a

casement consisting of many small pieces of glass. Too many obscure the prospect.

\* \* \* \*

Fully one half of the divine revelation is left out of the teaching of the Church of the nineteenth century: (1) The greater part of the meaning which lies in the connection of the verses. (2) The bulk of the prophecies. (3) The large biographical element. Preaching becomes a spider's web, hung on a few points, but woven to catch flies rather than to instruct mankind.

\* \* \* \*

Spiritualizing the statements of Scripture too often means taking away the bodily substance of their plain meaning and leaving them to a mere figurative influence upon the thoughts and conduct of Christians. Between a mad materialization of figurative language, as in the sacramental texts, and a mad spiritualization of plain and literal teachings of Jesus on practical duties, the whole commandment of God is "made void" by eighteen centuries of "interpretations."

\* \* \* \*

One may grow too old for speculative study of truth, but not for the practice or enjoyment of it.

\* \* \* \*

The literal interpretation of the threatening of *death* in relation to the body (for which no one would have thought of substituting any other) shows that the same literal interpretation applies to the soul: "destroy both soul and body in gehenna" (Matt. x. 28). The verb ἀπόλλυμι governs both accusatives, and cannot be taken in one sense for the body and in another for the soul.

\* \* \* \*

St. Paul's "Degree" in Divinity was "O.O.A."—Offscouring of Allthings—conferred on him by the Jewish Sanhedrim and the Athenian Areopagus.

\* \* \* \*

Your hearers are likely to become what you are—not what you say they ought to be.

\* \* \* \*

I know only one great difficulty in the way of a firm holding of the doctrine of "Life in Christ," and that is that I was chosen to



be one of the little group of men who were called to bring it again into public knowledge, after ages of "natural immortality" teaching and corresponding infidelity and atheism. But the Gospel of John, read in the plain signification of its terms, and compared with the language of Irenæus and Arnobius, can signify nothing else.

\* \* \* \* \*

What you feel towards the Bible depends on what you feel towards God, and that depends on the way you spend your time when you are alone. God visits His servants in solitude more than in society, except in the Church under favourable conditions.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Queen has not been compelled to wait for her reward in posthumous fame. During her lifetime and in her own later years she has enjoyed as great fame and honour as can come to her after her death, and in addition a living love from all ranks of people such as can be accorded only to the living. None of her elder contemporaries can think of her without emotion and none of her juniors without wonder and reverence. An honest, good woman in the highest place, who began in the fear of God and has been "kept by His power" ever since.

\* \* \* \* \*

In preaching the essentials are :—

1. The tone, which must be that of a messenger of God to men, not of an original revealer of truth or ingenious commentator. He is the Lord's messenger.

2. The solemnity and the joy of a man who has an eternal destiny to declare, of life or death.

3. The clearness and simplicity of one who knows exactly what he ought to say to people who are mostly not very educated persons. God has not spoken in dark sayings.

\* \* \* \* \*

Orthodox Churchmen profess to be astonished at the obstinate revolt of Unitarians against the doctrine of the Trinity, as formulated in the so-called Athanasian Creed. But who that has ever read the Gospel of St. John or one of Paul's epistles, or the epistle to the Hebrews, can pretend that they find anything resembling those creeds on the "Trinity" in the writings of the

chief apostles of the gospel? In every New Testament writing, and specially in the teaching of Jesus and St. John, the supremacy of the Father and the subjection of the Son are presented as primary articles of the faith ; so that, instead of an incarnation of the Trinity, it is always held out that it was the Word, or *Logos*, who "was made flesh," so being in the form of a *θεος* He thought it not a thing to be snatched at to be equal to a *θεος*, but emptied Himself, wherefore "*ὁ Θεος* hath highly exalted Him, &c." The great *Θεος*, *ὁ Θεος*, hath "given to the Son to have life in Himself." "My Father is greater than I" are words which Christ could never have spoken if (1) He were only a man ; or (2) if as *λογος* He was equal to the Father, of whom He says, "My Father is greater than I."

\* \* \* \* \*

The first preparation for service is to know and believe the "glad tidings of great joy ;" when these are forgotten there is no "gospel" to preach and no desire to preach any gospel.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Universe is not a mere mechanism of puppets, angels and men, actuated by an omnipotent will ; but it is a complex reality of free agents, and character is the principal element in it, depending on the action of those free agents. But it is awful to think that each man carries within him a will which can determine an eternal destiny, according as it is under the government of God or not in this present time. "Lead me in Thy truth and teach me, for Thou art the God of my salvation." And there is no salvation, no endless life, but in the favour and service of God and union with His Spirit. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and flesh is all corruptible.

\* \* \* \* \*

Suppose you wish to write a readable biography worth writing. First choose your subject. How many men do you know with a life history worth writing or sufficiently distinct to allow of obtaining a public to read it? Few persons are acquainted with one such character, of a man governed by a noble, courageous, sacrificial life-purpose, of sufficient interest to deserve commemoration when it is ended.

\* \* \* \* \*

The principal ground for separating from the Church of England is not in its Articles of belief, but in its constitution, as composed of millions falsely said to be "regenerated" in their infant baptism, and governed by a clergy the large majority of whom falsely declare that they "think themselves moved by the Holy Spirit to take upon themselves the ministry of the Word and the government of the Churches," when they know very well that they have no such persuasion, but have been "put into the priest's office for a piece of bread" and an easy life in grinding the ecclesiastical parish organ.

\* \* \* \* \*

Nothing so decisively proves that we are among those who will serve God "day and night in His temple" for ever, as the evidence of our practical life that we will serve and obey Him to-day.

\* \* \* \* \*

The unity of the Bible, the minute fitting of each stone of the structure to all the rest, resembles the workmanship of a bridge of arches over the dark river of death, in which each stone is fitted by its form to its special place in the work, and all together combine to make a solid and beautiful roadway across into the land of everlasting life beyond.

\* \* \* \* \*

Considered in their consequences, the two most mischievous elements in modern and mediæval theology are—

1. The doctrine of the Trinity as taught in the Athanasian Creed: "Three persons in one substance, equal and co-eternal."
2. The doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul, for good and bad alike.

The first renders unintelligible the sonship of Christ and the Incarnation of the Word, and nullifies our Lord's repeated declarations as to His relation to the Father, as His agent. The second subverts the very foundation of the Christian Dispensation, by denying (1) the total mortality of man, and (2) the object of the incarnation of the life eternal of the *Logos* to communicate eternal life to dying sinners.

\* \* \* \* \*

Misinterpretation of prophecy, and total neglect of prophecy, are the curses which Heaven has inflicted on apostolic Christen-

dom with respect to Christ's present government and approaching advent to reign over the nations ; just as the curse of blindness as to the prophecies of Christ's first advent came on the Jews in revenge for their spiritual apostasy from God. They knew not the Scriptures. In the same way the modern Churches, Roman, Greek, and Protestant, are completely blind to the meaning of the prophecies which foretell the premillennial second advent of Christ, His destruction of apostate Christendom, and His establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven over all the earth, with His saints reigning with Him over all nations—"caught up to meet the Lord in the air," and so ever with the Lord.

Will the Old Testament saints be raised also at that time? Why not? They beheld the glory from afar, and died for Him. Shall they not reign with Him? The saints of earth alive at the second advent will not sleep but will be all changed. If the saints then alive are to share the kingdom, why not the saints of all former ages? But St. Paul is explicit: "afterward they that are Christ's at His coming," which must include the whole company of the faithful.

\* \* \* \* \*

So long as the recognized alternative results of human life were eternal joy or eternal pain in consequence of the natural immortality of the soul, which was held as the basis of religion by all, there was no escape from Predestination as a cause of these effects; but with the reception of the truth on Life in Christ there will come a new acknowledgement of the freedom of man and of his responsibility for obedience of faith under the Gospel. "Why *will* ye die, O house of Israel?"

\* \* \* \* \*

## LUKE

Of all the men who companied with the apostles during the first century, I long for survival of St. Luke more than that of any early Christian. It is said that he had been a painter. At all events he possessed the genius of a painter, consecrated to the Master's service. He could describe the scenes of the apostolic labours and give reports of their teaching and depict the circumstances of their mission; and above all he could paint individual



life and character in such a way as to fix the picture in the memory of Christians in never-fading colours.

\* \* \* \* \*

2 Tim. iv. 11. "Only Luke is with me." Only Luke! the author of the third Gospel with its holy *Magnificat* and songs of angels and saints at the birth of Jesus, the ravishing accounts of the Redeemer's life and teaching, and the narratives of the "Acts of the Apostles." Only Luke! Well, that man was equal in interest to a whole Church full of ordinary Christians; a contemporary of Christ, an acquaintance of the twelve apostles, a spectator of the early miracles of the Gospel, and himself a companion and witness of St. Paul's wonderful and victorious assault on Greek and Roman paganism. Only Luke! But he was a whole company in himself, as well as a companion, and carried about with him the vivid story of the incarnation and the Christian revelation. Just think what a companion! the writer of the third Gospel and the Acts, who had seen so many famous cities, and talked with so many famous men, and heard at first-hand the narratives of Christ's life from its Palestinian spectators. Only Luke! So much the better! Other companions would have perhaps shut him up in silence. But Paul sums up all he felt in his phrase "the beloved physician" (Col. iv. 14 : *ὁ ἰατρὸς ὁ ἀγαπητός*).

The personality of St. Luke is a very important factor in the early gospel history. He was a physician, his mind exercised in accounting for morbid phenomena, anxious to cure diseases, and satisfied fully of the reality of Christ and His miracles. His writing proves his many-sided genius and general skill in common-sense thinking. He who had carefully traced out to its very sources Christ's history, adhered to his apostles, and remained as comforter, jail-companion, and fellow-worker with St. Paul at Rome in prospect even of his martyrdom, which was near at hand. It was Nero's reign. "The beloved physician" was loved in his own day, and [has been] loved by countless millions since, and most of all by educated men who are also believers in Christ. St. Luke still exercises his profession. How many melancholy souls has he cheered by opening his pages to them in their saddest hours, by unfolding the paintings of his

divine portfolio, worked in undying colours, and carrying through eighteen centuries the vivid picture of the apostolic age and the portraits of apostolic men. A poetic soul also, who could recover and set forth the *Magnificat* of the Mother of the Lord and the song of Zacharias, so that his book opens like an oratorio at the birth and ends with a vision of the ascending Jesus from Bethany.

Luke's mind, bred in criticism of diseases and in medicine, made him a first-rate witness to the gospel and its results.

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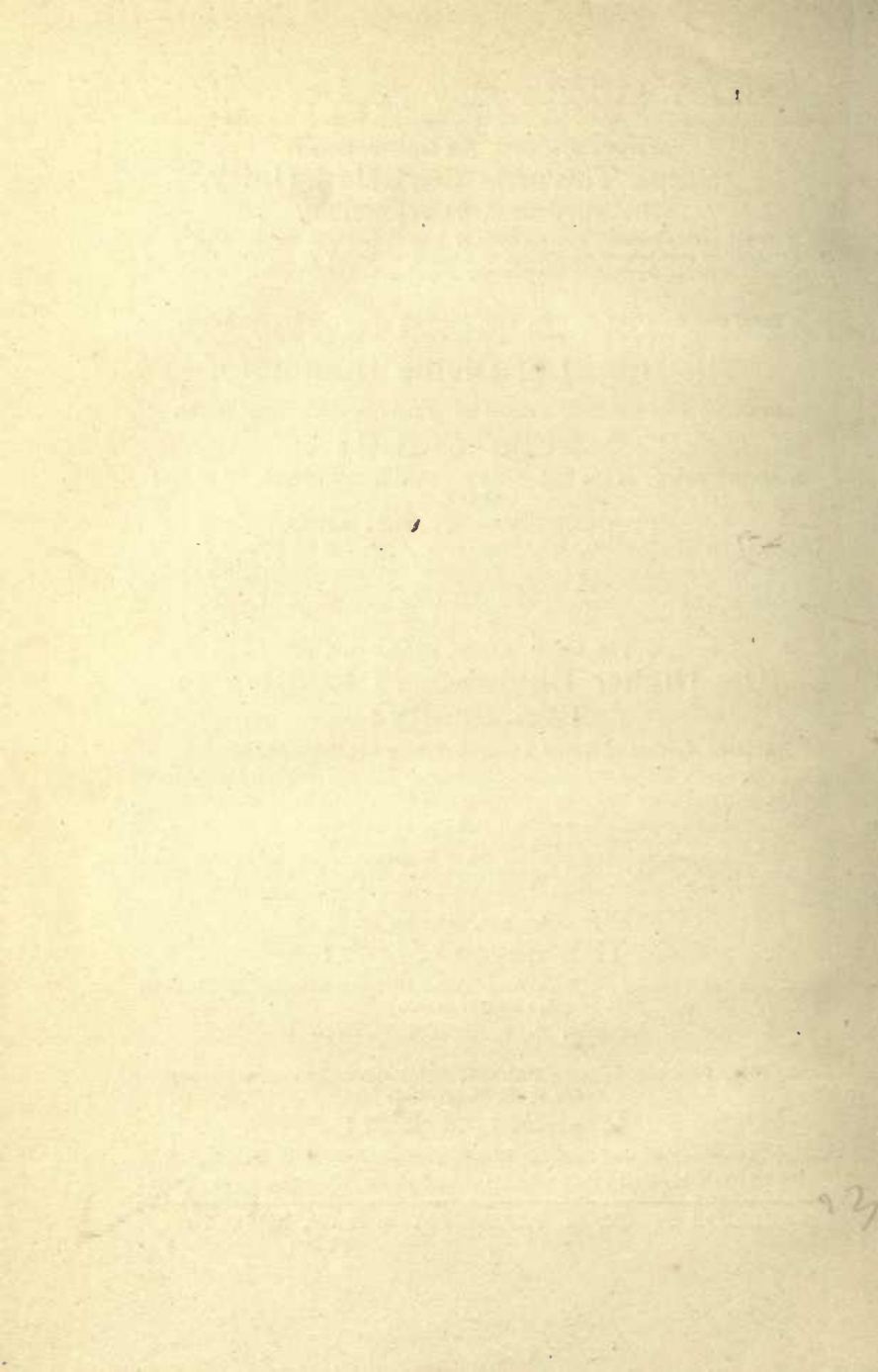
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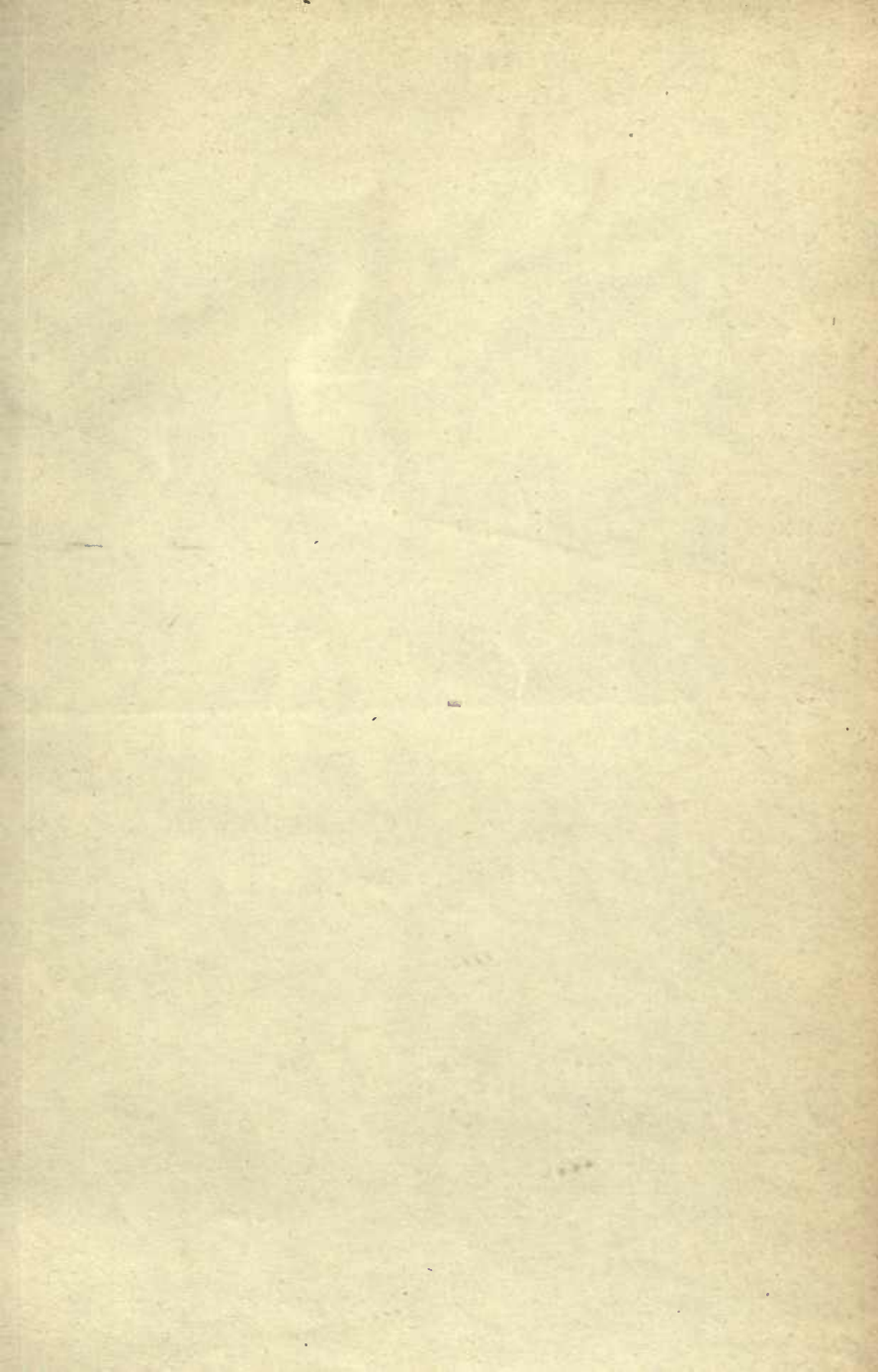
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